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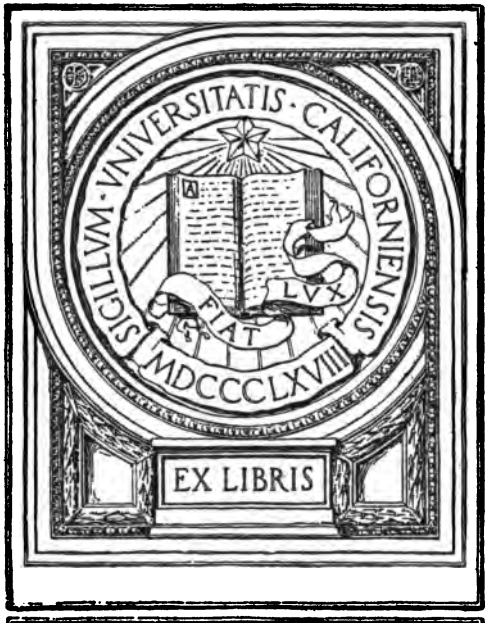
WHY WE PUNCTUATE

OR

REASON VERSUS RULE IN THE USE OF MARKS

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON KLEIN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WHY WE PUNCTUATE

OR

REASON VERSUS RULE IN THE USE OF MARKS

BY

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON KLEIN

"Punctuation seems to be an art based upon rules without congruity, and derived from practice without uniformity."

SECOND EDITION—ENTIRELY REWRITTEN.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
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1916

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TO MY WIFE

who during the many years the subject of punctuation has occupied my attention has ever been ready, with great intelligence and helpfulness, to discuss with me the intricate and often dull problems which punctuation presents

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED IN
LOVING APPRECIATION

343550

PREFACE

THE first edition of this work was published in 1896, and the treatment of the subject was so highly commended by many leading men and periodicals of the country that the entire edition, though a large one, was soon exhausted. In spite of this favorable commendation, which may have been due to my effort to set forth reasons, instead of rules, for the use of marks, I had a keen sense of certain shortcomings in the work, and have long been unwilling to permit its reprinting or to undertake its rewriting. At least one of the reasons—and I hope the principal one—why the work fell short of my ideal of the book needed, was the inevitable failure inherent in the mode of treating the subject. As a sentence may contain the four principal marks (comma, semicolon, colon, and period) and, in addition, one or more of the other marks, a writer courts failure if, in treating the difficult art of punctuation, he deals with the marks separately, beginning, as all writers, myself included, have hitherto done, with the comma, the most difficult mark to understand, and proceeding, one at a time, with the other marks. Failure follows this mode of treatment because it disregards the interrelation of marks and the relations between groups of words to be interpreted by marks.

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treatment, and have dealt, from the outset, with groups of interrelated marks, exhibiting, for instance, in a single illustrative sentence (No. 6) the four principal marks in their interrelation as affected by the sense relations of the language of the sentence. I believe that this treatment of the subject of punctuation is the only logical one; and because of the lack of a logical treatment of the subject it is no exaggeration to say that almost utter chaos as regards punctuation which is helpful to both reader and writer, exists everywhere, inside and outside of printing-offices.

In the preface of the first edition I said it was a remarkable fact that the subject of punctuation had been very inadequately treated, as evidenced by the existence at that time of only a single treatise on punctuation in the English language, and by the total absence of any consideration of it in periodical literature. This assertion, with slight modification, is true today. An admirable essay by Mr. Phillips Garrison, sometime editor of *The Nation*, appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for August, 1906. This essay, which deals with the interchangeability of marks, only confounds the confusion of punctuation. Mr. Garrison admits that the more the difficulties of the art of punctuation are faced and considered, the fuller becomes our understanding of the principles which do underlie the convention that makes punctuation correct or faulty. One of his illustrative examples exhibiting the interchangeability of three marks, is discussed herein; and an effort is made to discover the "principles" that determine the correct punctua-

tion of the example, and to show that the marks used by him are not interchangeable. No other article on punctuation is found in the world's great mass of periodical literature listed in American library Indexes.

The one treatise referred to above is the work of Mr. John Wilson, which, it may safely be asserted, is the only *treatise* on the subject in English. It is a masterful work, exhibiting an amount of research and a degree of acumen probably unexcelled in the preparation of a text-book on any subject. In spite of this fact, I think the work is so minute, so voluminous, and so lacking in scientific generalization, as to make mastery of its great number of rules, with "remarks" and exceptions equivalent to rules, an exceedingly difficult and, to many, an impossible task. Mr. Wilson's work was first published in 1826.

The excellent handbook of Mr. Marshall T. Bigelow, published in 1881, is merely a summary of the principal rules of Mr. Wilson's work. Its briefness greatly limits its value.

The work, entitled "Punctuation," of Mr. F. Horace Teall, published in 1897, is also an admirable handbook, but it gives more space to spelling than to punctuation. It gives only four pages, very small ones, to the consideration of the colon; and two of the colon's principal uses, discussed at length herein, are not mentioned.

Mr. Theodore L. De Vinne, the founder of the well-known De Vinne Press, published his "Correct Composition" in 1901. This work is indeed a treatise, but a treatise on printing, not on punctuation. Its treatment of punctuation is somewhat

iconoclastic, radically so at points. Some of its rules are excellent, but others are well-nigh incomprehensible.

The University of Chicago Press issued its "Manual of Style" in 1906, and its "Manual for Writers" in 1913. The latter work is edited by Professor John Matthews Manly, head of the Department of English in the University of Chicago, and Mr. John Arthur Powell, of the University of Chicago Press. These Manuals, in their treatment of punctuation, are practically identical, and each devotes less than thirty pages to the subject. Their rules are brief, clear, and comprehensive; but their inconsistencies in the use of marks are so great as to be exceedingly puzzling.

The Riverside Press, which for many years maintained the reputation of being one of the three or four most painstaking printing establishments in the world, recently issued a small "Handbook of Style," setting forth the style in use by that Press; but it also contains many errors and inconsistencies in punctuation, which lessen its value.

I have assumed, for several reasons, the seeming impropriety of criticising the above books: (1) they are recognized as the best authorities on the conventional use of marks, I acknowledge my indebtedness to them, and I show my appreciation of them by quoting no others in my discussion of the subject; (2) criticism of usage by any other class of writers is worthless; (3) my own work, if it will not stand comparison with the above-named works, has no value, and I invite such comparison by my specific criticism

of some of their examples which exhibit the fundamental principles of punctuation.

In no work known to me has an attempt been made to show the sense relations between parts of language with such relations indicated by marks, themselves differentiated by these sense relations. A single illustration will serve to show the truth of this broad assertion concerning the sense relations between groups of words determined by marks, yet not recognized by writers on punctuation. Practically all such writers use a comma after *etc.*, the comma of course following the period. The two Manuals of the University of Chicago Press and the Handbook of The Riverside Press specifically name this as the proper punctuation. That such punctuation disregards the sense relations determined by the meaning of language, is proved, I think, beyond question by illustrative Sentence 7–1 herein.

If my own work is of any value, or possesses any degree of originality, it is to be found in my efforts to show that the sense relations between groups of words are a large factor in determining the meaning of language, and that a mark of punctuation, or even its absence, sometimes determines a sense relation, and at other times only serves readily to point it out. Neither the comma in illustrative Sentence 1–1 nor the semicolons in Sentence 7 determine meanings: they simply suggest them. The absence of commas in Sentence 3, and their presence in Sentence 3–1, determine meanings.

As the difficulties in punctuation arise largely from the subtle relations between groups of words

into which all language, often the simplest, is divided, the study of punctuation becomes in reality the study of language. Upon the importance attached to the clear understanding and correct use of language, depends the value of punctuation.

I desire to express my high appreciation of the helpful suggestions and criticisms made by three friends, each of whom has read the proof of this work one or more times, bringing to the arduous task large knowledge of the subtle principles of punctuation and of language. Of these friends, Mr. W. F. Webster, Principal of the East High School, Minneapolis, is well known in educational circles as a teacher of English, as a lecturer, and as the author of a widely used text-book on composition and literature. Mr. S. R. Winchell, of Chicago, is likewise well known in educational circles as a high-school and college teacher, and as the author of several text-books on English and Latin. Dr. William Davis, of St. Paul, is an unusually critical scholar and a lover of good English, with an extensive editorial experience.

Minneapolis, Minnesota,
February 1, 1916.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I HOPE my appreciation of the difficulties which beset the student and teacher of punctuation may justify a suggestion from me as to a good method in the study of the subject with this book as a guide.

Until one has gained almost complete mastery of the meanings of marks and of the subtle sense relations between the groups of words constituting language, he cannot interpret such relations when indicated by marks or by their omission. The first step, then, for the student is not to give extended consideration to points discussed herein which are not readily comprehended by him, but to gain mastery of the reasons for the use of marks which indicate language relations that are thoroughly familiar to him. The principles of punctuation, unlike the principles of mathematics, are not regularly progressive from the simple to the complex; therefore the student should not attempt to master consecutively such principles. Let him, rather, read the entire work carefully, marking with his pencil the illustrative sentences whose punctuation presents principles which, though new to him, are still obvious. This course, repeated with special attention to the marked sentences, will, I am sure, give him a comprehension of the nice relations in language which may be clearly pointed out by marks of punctuation based upon reason.

PREFACE

THE first edition of this work was published in 1896, and the treatment of the subject was so highly commended by many leading men and periodicals of the country that the entire edition, though a large one, was soon exhausted. In spite of this favorable commendation, which may have been due to my effort to set forth reasons, instead of rules, for the use of marks, I had a keen sense of certain shortcomings in the work, and have long been unwilling to permit its reprinting or to undertake its rewriting. At least one of the reasons—and I hope the principal one—why the work fell short of my ideal of the book needed, was the inevitable failure inherent in the mode of treating the subject. As a sentence may contain the four principal marks (comma, semicolon, colon, and period) and, in addition, one or more of the other marks, a writer courts failure if, in treating the difficult art of punctuation, he deals with the marks separately, beginning, as all writers, myself included, have hitherto done, with the comma, the most difficult mark to understand, and proceeding, one at a time, with the other marks. Failure follows this mode of treatment because it disregards the interrelation of marks and the relations between groups of words to be interpreted by marks.

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CHAPTER I

THE FUNCTIONS OF MARKS, AND HOW PERFORMED

A MARK of punctuation is used because it has a meaning, and serves a useful, if not an indispensable, purpose in printed language.[1] In order to serve such purpose, the meaning of the mark must be thoroughly understood by both the writer and the reader.

The function of marks is twofold:

1. To reveal the *real* meaning of printed language.
2. To reveal such meaning *at a glance.*

Marks perform this function in three ways:

1. By breaking up apparent groups of words, which readily form themselves into new groups.
2. By showing the relations between groups.
3. By characterizing a group of words.

Language, both printed and spoken, conveys meaning, not only by the meanings of the words constituting such language, but by the meanings of the relations between the words, used singly or in groups. In spoken language these relations are indicated, at least to a considerable extent, by pauses and by inflections of the voice; in printed language, however, we are compelled to use punctuation to indicate them. As

[1] For the sake of brevity, we shall frequently use herein the term *printed* language to include *written* language.

spoken language is generally quite different from written language, marks of punctuation do not always indicate voice-inflections; but, as both marks and inflections express the sense relations between groups of words, they are not infrequently suggestive of each other. For instance, each of the three end-marks groups words into a sentence, and tells what kind of a sentence it follows. Let us illustrate this in a dialogue between a teacher and a pupil:

Pupil. John has gone home.
Teacher. John has gone home? [or]
Teacher. John has gone home!

We call the first sentence a *declarative* sentence because it makes a declaration. We call the second, regardless of its form, an *interrogative* sentence because it asks a question (interrogates). We call the third an *exclamatory* sentence because it expresses surprise (exclamation).

In the oral conversation between the teacher and the pupil the voice would readily indicate the meaning of each sentence; but on the printed page marks of punctuation are necessary to convey the meaning. Thus each mark in these sentences *characterizes* the kind of sentence it follows, and thus reveals the *real* meaning of the language.

The meanings of these three marks are so plain that they give little trouble to any reader, even the youngest. Most of the marks that fall within the sentence should convey meanings quite as plainly and quite as readily as do these three end-marks. It is

the purpose of our study that they be made to do so, for they are quite as useful as the end-marks.

Marks are used intelligently only when each mark can give an intelligent answer to the reader who, meeting it on the printed page, challenges it with "What do you say to me?" This challenge may be made the supreme test of the value of any mark of punctuation.

The function of marks can best be shown by a study of their uses in illustrative examples:[1]

1. Respect the rights of children and their mothers will respect you.

No mark is required in this sentence to reveal its real meaning, for that is unmistakable; but almost any reader will momentarily mistake the meaning at the point where it seems to read as if written "the rights of children and *of* their mothers." When the reader discovers that "the rights of their mothers" are not referred to, he is like a traveler who has taken the wrong road, and, discovering his mistake, must retrace his steps.

If a mistake has been made in reading this sentence, the reader must go back to the point where the mistake was made, and regroup the words. The process of regrouping the parts of a sentence is both distracting and tiresome when reading silently, and is very awkward when reading aloud.

The mistake is a mistake in grouping, that is in

[1] In order to avoid the too frequent use of a formal word (thus, as follows, etc.), to introduce our illustrative examples, we use the colon, thus indicating that the *colon* relation exists between what precedes and what follows the mark. This somewhat uncommon use of the colon is explained on another page.

making one group of the words "children and their mothers" when these words are not so grouped by the meaning of the language.

We call "and" a *conjunction*, that is, a *grouping* word. It naturally groups together the two words between which it stands, especially if they make sense when so grouped. If these words are not to be thus grouped, the reader will be helped by having notice to this effect at the point where a wrong grouping may be made. We place a sign-board to guide a traveler; and one is equally useful to guide a reader. A mark of punctuation is the reader's sign-board; and it is *to be read* for its *directions*.

As we cannot well discuss at this point in our study the proper mark to use in Sentence 1 we may select the comma, leaving the reason for the selection to be considered later. Thus the sentence written with a sign-board, is as follows:

1–1.[1] Respect the rights of children, and their mothers will respect you.

The answer to the challenge, "What do you mean?" put by the reader to the comma in this sentence, would be somewhat like this: "Reader, 'and' is not to be followed by a word with the same relation to 'of' that 'children' sustains to 'of.'" In other words, "and" does not form the very simple group of words that it appears to form without the comma: it forms a new group.

With this notice, the first group is quite auto-

[1] Sentences herein numbered by hyphenated figures are modifications, with some exceptions, of preceding sentences designated by the first figures of the hyphenated numbers,—for example, Sentence 1–1 is a modification of Sentence 1 in its punctuation.

matically formed by the reader; for the meaning of the language up to this point has been fully comprehended, and is not to be supplemented by any word in the *and* relation to "children."

In a sentence as simple in its grouping as No. 1, the liability to error is not very great, especially for one who has read much; nor is the readjustment of the thought, in case such a reader has made a mistake, very difficult for him. In more complex sentences, the confusion of ideas becomes more marked, and more difficult of readjustment even by the experienced reader:

2. . . . Far beyond this group of beautiful hills fell gradually to the plain.

The words in the first line of this sentence, as above printed, group themselves together in a natural manner, forming a definite picture; but, when the reader reaches the first word in the second line, he discovers that a subject must be found for "fell," for he has made a wrong grouping. It is probable that most readers would read to the end of the sentence in search of a clue to the proper grouping, then turn back to the beginning, and regroup the words after a careful study of their relations. Although the sense is thus easily obtained, the process of regrouping is distracting.

The trouble arises from the fact that the words in the first line naturally fall into a group which makes good sense, but not the sense intended by the writer. A mark (sign-board) is needed to show the reader that the *natural* grouping is not the correct grouping. We mean by the "natural" grouping that grouping

which arises from reading the words in the usual way, thus making "this group of beautiful hills" the object of "beyond." In other words, the *natural* meaning is the *apparent* meaning.

When the *apparent* meaning is not the *real* meaning, the reader is momentarily misled,—that is, he gets off the real line of thought, just as a traveler gets off the right road.

With a sign-board the sentence will read as follows:

2–1. Far beyond, this group of beautiful hills fell gradually to the plain.

In this detached sentence we do not know the object of "beyond." It would, however, be furnished by what preceded it in the context; and yet the liability to error in reading the complete, unpunctuated sentence would still exist. Let us supply the context:

2–2. In the morning we saw in the east a group of hills, the crest of which we reached at noonday. Far beyond, this group of beautiful hills fell gradually to the plain.

The context furnishes the object of "beyond," which is "the crest."

REAL AND APPARENT MEANINGS

Let us examine somewhat more carefully the meanings of "real" and "apparent," terms which we have used, and shall continue to use, in our study.

The *real* meaning of any group of words is the meaning it unquestionably conveys to the intelligent reader after careful examination, if such an examination be required by its complexity. It is also the meaning the writer presumably desires to convey.

The *apparent* meaning of such group of words is the meaning it conveys when read at sight.

The apparent meaning should always be the real meaning. If it is not, the language needs either recasting or regrouping. Recasting is done by changing the positions of words or by the use of new words. Regrouping is done by the use of marks of punctuation, which thus perform their functions. Each of the three end-marks also determines the character of the group it follows, as we have already seen.

In Sentences 1 and 2 we obtained the apparent, and *wrong*, meaning at the first reading; and we obtained the real (right) meaning at the second reading. Marks, understood by the writer and the reader, give the reader the real meaning at the first reading, at least when the marks are used properly.

In each of Sentences 1–1 and 2–1 the mark of punctuation was used to *disconnect* words apparently connected. In Sentence 1–1 the apparent connection was made by a conjunction (and); in Sentence 2–1 it was made by a preposition (beyond). Thus, in each corrected sentence, the comma performed the office of *disjunction;* and therefore the comma might be called a *disjunctive.* When the reader thus disconnects words he regroups them, and learns, quite automatically, the proper relation between the new groups.

Let us note carefully that we are not dealing with difficult or obscure processes, but with processes familiar to the ordinary reader, and equally familiar to the speaker, this grouping being done in speaking, as already stated, by inflections of the voice and by pauses, which are understood by very young readers.

The relations between words and groups of words are expressed in terms of grammar; but we shall avoid in our discussion, as far as possible, the use of technical terms.

In our next sentence no change in grouping is necessary unless we want to make a complete change in the meaning of the language:

3. The prisoner said the witness was a convicted thief.

The apparent meaning of this sentence is its real meaning, for its language is capable of only one construction. If, however, the writer of the sentence wished to convey another meaning, he could have done so by recasting the sentence or by regrouping it by means of marks of punctuation. If we put a comma after "prisoner" we disconnect "prisoner" from "said"; and the comma gives notice to the reader that new relations for the words "prisoner" and "said" must be sought. The only other *sense* relations for the words are found quite automatically the moment the eye catches the next two words, which suggest to the reader a new group. When the new group (said the witness) is complete, the reader automatically cuts it off from what follows and what precedes. Thus we have, as shown in the following sentence, a new grouping and a new meaning:

3–1. The prisoner, said the witness, was a convicted thief.

The meaning of voice-changes is understood by children long before the meaning of marks of punctuation is understood; while the full value of marks is rarely understood, even by educated and cultured people.

In spoken language the meaning of No. 3 is expressed by a continuous reading with neither pause nor voice-inflection within the sentence. The reading of No. 3–1, in order to convey its meaning to another person, requires quite a different voice process, which may be represented diagrammatically:

3–2. The prisoner was a convicted thief.
said the witness

An analysis of one's process of reading silently, that is, to himself, will show that, in reading No. 3–1, he takes note of the commas and their meanings (disconnecting and regrouping), just as he takes note, when reading aloud, of the group depressed (written in a line below) in No. 3–2.

To obtain the real meaning of this sentence when reading silently, he reads it *commatically;* to impart the meaning when reading aloud, he reads it *inflectionally.*

Our next illustrative sentence and its variations are not much unlike the sentences just considered; but the relations between some of the words in them are not quite so familiar to young readers:

4. Boys like Henry never fail in school.

The meaning of this sentence is unmistakable, and at no point within it is a mark of punctuation even suggested; but in a similarly formed sentence doubt as to the meaning may arise:

4–1. Boys like men may be courageous for principle's sake.

"Like Henry" in No. 4 suggests some distinguishing quality that Henry is known to possess,—for

instance, *diligence.* Then, "boys like Henry" means "diligent boys." But "like men" suggests no particular qualities ascribed to boys; and therefore, if the term "like men" is not applicable to or intended for "boys," we cut it off by commas. Thus an *apparent* relation is shown not to be the *real* relation; and therefore we must regroup the words, seeking the new meaning through our knowledge of the meaning of language thus regrouped. The regrouped sentence will read as follows:

4–2. Boys, like men, may be courageous for principle's sake.

Regrouping of this kind cannot be automatically made by a writer, or automatically apprehended by a reader, until the meanings of both the unpunctuated and the punctuated language are perfectly familiar to the writer or the reader. One's familiarity with language need not be purely technical to make it accurate and thorough; but we cannot readily discuss the language of our illustrative sentences without using some technical (grammatical) terms.

"Like men" in No. 4–1 is an adjective, and is in the natural position of an adjective of this kind. "Like men" in No. 4–2 is an adverb, and is out of its natural position, thus readily giving rise to a wrong grouping of the words in the sentence. To prevent such wrong grouping, commas are used; and they will be used by a writer quite automatically when the purpose and effect of such use are understood.

The use of most of the marks of punctuation should become as automatic as is the spelling of most words; but some parts of each art become automatic

on'y after much study. The similarity between some of the difficulties presented by the arts of spelling and of punctuation seems worthy of notice at this point in our discussion. To spell the word pronounced *pâr*, one must know whether he is to spell the name of a fruit (pear), two things of a kind (pair), or the act of cutting (pare). Likewise, to punctuate language one must first know what relations exist between the parts of language. Every group of words, as well as every word, sustains some relation to another word or group of words in the sentence or paragraph. Somewhat exact knowledge of this relation is possessed by everybody, even by the child just beginning to talk. It is a part of one's common sense; but, unfortunately, many text-books on language, used in the grade school, the high school, and the college, bury the common-sense knowledge of the pupil under technicalities that are never mastered. In like manner the technicalities of punctuation have made the art so difficult that it may be said to be almost a lost art. We are attempting to rediscover it through our common sense.

Let the reader challenge the first comma, when he reaches it, in No. 4–2 with "What do you say?" The answer will be, "Reader, if you think 'like men' is an adjective describing 'boys,' as 'like Henry' describes 'boys' in No. 4, you are mistaken, and you must look for another meaning." A like challenge of the second comma, if necessary, will elicit this answer: "Reader, if you think 'men' is the subject of 'may,' you are mistaken, and you must look for another meaning."

That the use of the commas in No. 4–2 is practically the same as their use in No. 3–1, may also be illustrated diagrammatically:

4–3. Boys may be courageous for principle's like men sake.

There is another and very important class of words whose sense relation is determined by the punctuation we have been considering. We shall merely touch upon this punctuation at this time, leaving it for fuller discussion later.

As the context is often necessary to show the real meaning of a word, we will supply it for our first example.

In response to a request to be excused from school, a teacher informs a pupil that he may go later. At a later hour the teacher says to him:

5. Now you may go.

The word "now" is here expressive purely of time, and suggests no other meaning than that obtained at the first reading. The sentence is another form of "You may go now," which requires no punctuation other than the period. The word "now," as here used, is an adverb expressing time.

In a similarly formed sentence the office of the word may be quite different; and, in order to show this fact, the comma is used.

5–1. Now we see we that cannot learn to punctuate until we comprehend the fundamental principles underlying the relations between groups of words, as well as the fundamental principles underlying the use of marks. Now, what are we going to do about it?

In No. 5–1 the first "now" conveys a sufficient idea of time to stand as an adverb, just as "now" does in No. 5; but the second "now" is a mere expletive. To show that it does not sustain its *apparent* relation, the relation of time, to the remainder of the clause, it is cut off by a comma.

RECAPITULATION

Let us now review and recapitulate the points we have tried to establish in our study thus far:

1. The meaning of language depends very largely upon the groupings of its words. In very simple language, words are so placed that each word is related to a word or words immediately or closely following or preceding it. In such language the reader is hardly conscious that the words are grouped, except into sentences; and no mark may be required, except the end-mark.

2. In more complex language the grouping within the sentence becomes manifest to the reader, and two constructions and two meanings of the language often become possible. In order to notify the reader which meaning the language is intended to convey, the writer may put a sign-board at the point where the meaning may be mistaken. The reader reads the sign-board, and thus keeps on the right line of thought-development.

3. In the sentences thus far studied, except No. 3–1, marks were used simply to aid the reader to catch the meaning quickly by avoiding a wrong grouping of words. In No. 3–1 the meaning of the language was entirely changed by the marks.

[Examples will be found at the end of Chapter II]

CHAPTER II

THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF PUNCTUATION—GROUPING

WE endeavored to show in Chapter I that the fundamental purpose of punctuation is to group by means of marks words whose relations in the absence of marks would be either easily mistaken or not quickly apprehended.

When to use a mark, and what mark to use, are determined by *reason* or by *convention.*

Some of the *conventions* that determine a punctuation familiar to most people, together with some of the problems that confront us in our study, are exhibited in the punctuation of the following sentence:

5A. Mr. Smith came to the city in 1872, and located at 1872 Wabash Avenue. He brought with him 1,872 horses, valued at $187,200.00.

How does punctuation enable the reader to obtain the meaning at one point in the above sentence, and so to group the language (figures) at another point that he can apprehend the meaning at a glance? Because of well-nigh universal usage, the above *date* and *street* numbers are read *eighteen hundred seventy-two;* but the same number in the next sentence is read *one thousand eight hundred seventy-two.* As we all know, in arithmetical notation three figures form a group, the groups so formed being named *units, thou-*

sands, *millions*, etc. It is therefore evident that, in reading a number containing two or more such groups, the eye will be aided if the groups are indicated by some mark. (We here use the comma and the period for this purpose.) Although the left-hand group of a number may not be full, a figure in that group takes the name of the group, and so we mark it off. Thus we use commas in two of the numbers in our example, one of which (1,872) has only one figure in the second (thousand) group. This we call punctuation by reason, for we thus point off natural groups.

We do not use the comma to group the figures in the same number (1872) used in two other places in the above example. Because date and street numbers of four figures are read in groups of two figures each the eye readily does the grouping, and a mark is not needed as an aid in the grouping. This is also punctuation by reason.

In the fourth number in our example we use a comma to do one grouping, and a period to make another (the cents) group. We call the use of the period in this number *conventional* punctuation.

Many printing-offices do not punctuate a number containing less than five figures. Such a rule would call for 9999 and 10,000. This is purely arbitrary punctuation. Our problem is to find, as far as possible, a reason for the use of every mark, and to point out what seems to us good conventional usage in punctuation for which we can find no reason.

THE NAMES OF MARKS

The names of the principal marks were given to them by the Greek grammarians, the name of each

mark being the name of the group of words with which the mark was used. The group of words which we call a *sentence*, they called a *period*. They arbitrarily marked its end by a dot, and called the dot also a "period." We retain the name of the mark. They called one of the largest divisions of a sentence a *limb*, and set it off with a mark called the "kolon," which means a limb. We retain the name of the mark in our word colon. The same is true of the mark we still call a *comma*. The *semicolon* is a mark of later date; and, as its name implies, it falls between the comma and the colon in its character and use.

THE RELATIVE VALUES OF MARKS

We still recognize, at least in large measure, the values given the marks by the Greek grammarians; and the principle is important in our study. Thus we say, of the four principal marks the comma indicates the slightest degree of separation between groups of words within a sentence; the semicolon indicates the next larger division; and the colon indicates the largest division. The period separates a full sentence from the sentence standing next to it; and it is also used when a sentence stands alone.

We have seen the need of marks in the above illustrative sentences, and have also seen *where* the marks were needed; but we had to *assume* that the comma was the proper mark to use. We now know the relative values given the marks by the Greek grammarians. If our knowledge of language, even though it is not based upon technical grammar, teaches us that the degree of separation between the groups

of words where we found the need of a mark, was the least degree requiring a mark, then the comma was the proper mark to use. With this relative degree of separation in language and the relative value of the comma intelligently settled, we can assert that we punctuated our illustrative sentences in Chapter I by *reason*, and not by *rule*. An apparent exception to the exact truth of this statement is presented in the punctuation of Sentence 1–1, because the degree of separation between its parts cannot be exactly fixed. We discuss this point in Chapters IV and VII.

A sentence exhibiting the relations calling for the use of the four principal marks will serve to show their relative values, and the relative degrees of separation between groups of words which the marks indicate:

6. Athens' freedom and her power have, for more than twenty centuries, been annihilated; her people have degenerated into timid slaves; her language, into a barbarous jargon; her temples have been given up to the successive depredations of Romans, Turks, and Scotchmen: but her intellectual empire is imperishable.

Reading this sentence with the knowledge of the comma already gained, we reach the end of the first fairly complete group of words, where we meet a semicolon. Let us challenge this mark, or sign-board, for its meaning. In answer, it says that what is to follow is not to be tied in the *comma* relation to what has preceded, as would be the case if the sentence continued in the following way:

6–1. Athens' freedom and her power have, for more than twenty centuries, been annihilated, her people having degenerated through luxury.

The semicolon, on the contrary, says that the group of words to follow is of equal rank with the whole group which has preceded the mark; and it thus shows how the sentence is to develop. The next semicolon in No. 6 says to the reader that a series of semicolon-divided groups is under way. This makes easy reading up to the colon, which, being followed by "but," is to mark the *extent* of the *but* relation between what is to follow and what has preceded. The meaning of the colon, as learned from its original use, tells the reader that the sentence is divided into members, or "limbs"; and therefore the *but* relation here is between all that precedes and all that is to follow, for these groups constitute the limbs of the sentence. If what follows the colon was to be tied to less than all that precedes, the *but* relation could extend only to the last semicolon, thus completing this particular group. It is very evident that the *but* relation could not terminate in the midst of language tied together as are the groups preceding "but" in this sentence; and yet many good writers use the semicolon, instead of the colon, in sentences like this, probably, however, without considering what grouping is thus made.

The entire sentence is divided into two groups by the colon, as the sense relation manifestly requires. If we change the order of the two larger groups in No. 6, the colon will be the first mark reached by the reader; and it will give him notice of what is to follow:

6–2. Athens' intellectual empire is imperishable: but her freedom and her powers have, for more than twenty centuries, been annihilated . . .

Here the colon, if challenged for its meaning, would say that all that follows it in the sentence is to form one group in the *but* relation to all that precedes, with the further information that what follows is to be divided into groups by semicolons, thus requiring the colon to divide the sentence into two main parts. A semicolon at this point would have given another reply, and would not have been followed by other semicolons.

Probably the beginner in the study of punctuation will not fully comprehend this discussion of Sentence 6 and its modifications; but the discussion may throw some additional light on the *disjunctive* and *grouping* office of the four marks, including the period at the end of the sentence.

We will now consider a sentence in which the grouping, with its consequent punctuation, is at once very simple and very subtle. It is subtle because it is based upon the subtle meanings of the language; and yet it becomes very simple when the language is understood:

7. The following are the names of the Deity and of Jesus Christ:

1. Jehovah, Lord, God Almighty; Creator, Father, Preserver, Governor; the Supreme Being; the Holy Spirit.

2. The Messiah, the Anointed; the Son, the Savior, the Redeemer; the Holy One; Prophet, Teacher, Master; Judge of the World.

Commas would be sufficient here to indicate what word or group of words constitutes a name; but there is additional information in the grouping of names which the writer desires to convey, and which, per-

haps, would not appear to many readers if attention were not directed to it by proper grouping, which is done here by semicolons. It will be seen that the number of names in a group in the above example varies from one to four.

What information does this grouping convey, and upon what is the grouping based? The words in the first group are the primary terms for the Deity (Exodus vi, 2, 3); in the second group, the names of the Deity which express His relation to man; etc.

The next sentence shows a similar grouping, but a grouping based upon more familiar and more marked characteristics of the things grouped:

7–1. Among the chief products of Minnesota are the following: wheat, corn, and oats; potatoes, beets, beans, etc.; butter and cheese; lumber; iron; etc.

The semicolon grouping here needs no explanation, although the use of a mark at one point in the sentence may seem at variance with the punctuation at another point. In the second group a comma is used before "etc."; and at the end of the sentence a semicolon precedes "etc." The punctuation is consistent with the uses of the two marks in other parts of the sentence. In the second group the comma says the *group* is not complete; and therefore "etc." stands for unexpressed items of the group, such, for instance, as *peas*. The last semicolon indicates to the reader that there are other groups; for instance, *cattle, sheep, and hogs* might constitute a group.

Many readers pass over punctuation of this kind; and they do not understand, or seek to understand, the meaning of such grouping as that in No. 7, while,

because of its simplicity, that in No. 7–1 scarcely attracts their attention.

In the next sentence the grouping is informing and somewhat striking. The sentence, with a slight modification, is taken from a U. S. Census Report:

7-2. I have the honor to transmit herewith statistical tables of mortality; the insane, feeble-minded, deaf and dumb, and blind; crime, pauperism, and benevolence; education; churches; foreign-born population; and manufactures.

The third group in this sentence is particularly striking, for it suggests the relationship between crime and pauperism, and the consequent private effort, in the form of benevolence, to deal with a social condition with which every government must deal.

Thus in Sentence 7–2 the grouping by semicolons imparts information which might be readily overlooked.

PUNCTUATION OF A SERIES

Sentence 7–2 suggests two uses of the comma to be found in the simplest sentences, one of which uses we almost take for granted, and the other is a mooted use. Why do we use the comma between nouns standing together? and why do we omit it before the first "and," and use it before the next "and," in the second group (the insane, feeble-minded, deaf and dumb, and blind)?

We answer that each use is based upon the fundamental principle of punctuation, the principle of *disjunction*, which distinguishes between the *apparent*

and the *real* meaning of words or groups of words standing together.

It may be said, with apparent good reason, that no comma is absolutely necessary to separate the second and third nouns in such a group as "wheat, corn, and oats"; and it is quite common practice not to use a comma before the final "and" in such a group. While this practice may be correct, it is to be remembered that we are seeking helpful punctuation, not the absolutely necessary in each instance; and the most helpful punctuation is that which is most nearly uniform in its treatment of cases falling into well-defined classes.

As we are now considering what is technically called a *series*, it is well to consider the value of consistency in the punctuation of a series. A few examples will illustrate this point:

8. William Henry and James are at school.

The words in the above stand in the natural order and relations to express thought in almost the simplest form of language. "William" is a noun sustaining to "Henry" the adjective relation, just as it would do in the name *William Smith*, even though our grammars give it another relation. If we do not wish it to stand in this relation and to convey this meaning, we disconnect the two words by a comma:

8–1. William, Henry and James are at school.

This sentence names three boys; and its meaning is unmistakable at a glance.

We saw in Sentence 1 the tendency of the reader to combine in one group words connected by "and,"

which is the natural manner of reading. Because of this fact, notice is to be given by punctuation when "and" does not connect the words between which it stands, unless notice is given in another way, as it often is. As Sentence 8–1 is written, "Henry and James" appears to constitute a group to be followed by other words in a series, just as is the case in the second group of No. 7–2. This tendency to wrong grouping will be seen in reading the following sentence:

8–2. Among the earliest colleges established in America were Yale, Trinity, William and Mary, and Harvard.

In this sentence one college (William and Mary) is named by a group of words connected by "and," this group being followed by another name also connected by "and" to what precedes. All punctuators admit that such grouping imperatively demands a comma before the final "and," for without the comma the reader could not possibly ascertain from the language the names of the colleges.

As such grouping is very common, and as the tendency to group together words connected by "and" is quite natural, the use of the comma before the final "and" in every series is *helpful* punctuation. This punctuation makes the absence of the comma before "and" give notice that a group of words within, and not at the end of, the series, is reached. For this reason it is well to make the punctuation of every series uniform.

This punctuation requires a comma before "and" in No. 8–1:

8–3. William, Henry, and James are at school.

Unless one, in reading aloud, exhibits the grouping by voice-inflection, his hearers may not comprehend the meaning conveyed by the grouping. Failure thus to show the grouping in No. 8–2 would utterly confuse the hearer as to the names of the two colleges designated by a group of words in which two "ands" appear. This relation between voice-inflection and punctuation is considered in our discussion of Sentence 28 and its variations.

A possible and apparent exception to the punctuation exhibited in No. 8–3 may be demanded in the punctuation of a very familiar group of words, the address line of a speech:

8–4. Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The voice-inflection of almost every speaker who uses these words, as well as of almost every person who reads them aloud, exhibits a grouping that inhibits the use of a comma before "and." In other words, the people addressed by the speaker are divided into two groups,—the "president" constituting one group, and "ladies and gentlemen" another. This grouping is exhibited by the voice-inflection of the speaker or reader and by the omission of a comma before "and" by the printer.

If, on the other hand, three groups are to be made of the persons addressed, the voice-inflection and the punctuation (a comma before "and") should show the grouping.

In the absence of a comma before "and" in this group, the language of the group does not constitute what we technically call a "series"; and therefore

the omission of the comma is only an *apparent* exception to the punctuation of a series.

We call attention to the punctuation of this group of words because we find it in the two Manuals issued by the University of Chicago Press. It is there printed without an explanation of the omission of the comma, although such omission is contrary to the rule given in each Manual for the punctuation of a series, while the words appear in another place in one of the Manuals with a comma before "and." The words appear in the Manuals as illustrations of the use of capitals and italics, and not in connection with punctuation.

It may be well to recall that the relation between any two words or groups of words in a series is the relation shown by the final conjunction. If expressed, this conjunction is either "and" or "or"; if not expressed, it is practically always "and."

It is a quite common practice to use a comma before the final "and" in a series requiring semicolons between the preceding groups. This punctuation often leaves the reader in doubt as to whether the "and" completes a group or ends the series; therefore the better punctuation is to use a semicolon before the final "and" in such a series.

The value of grouping is further shown in the following sentence:

9. There are no better cosmetics than temperance and purity, modesty and humility, a gracious temper and calmness of spirit.

We group the words in this sentence for the same

reason that the words are grouped in Nos. 7, 7–1, and 7–2. It is simply natural grouping based upon the sense of the language.

How much would be lost in the absence of such grouping may be seen by breaking up the simple groups in No. 9:

9–1. There are no better cosmetics than temperance, purity, modesty, humility, a gracious temper, and calmness of spirit.

The punctuation of No. 9–1 is just as correct as that of No. 9; but it is purely mechanical and not "elegant." Forceful grouping, with or without grouping words, requires proper punctuation.

Another quite simple form of this grouping, based upon the sense relation, is sometimes overlooked by distinguished writers, and even by authors of textbooks on language. The following sentence exhibits both a correct grouping and a correct sense relation:

10. He is in doubt about the best course for him to pursue; but I am sure about the best course for me to pursue.

Here the *but* relation is between *his doubt* and *my certainty*, as if written, *He is in doubt; but I am sure.*

A similarly formed sentence may convey a meaning that is clearly not the meaning the writer wishes to convey:

10–1. He is in doubt about the best course for him to pursue; but I am sure his doubt will soon disappear.

The *but* relation in No. 10–1 is not between *his doubt* and *my certainty*, as in No. 10. The meaning of No. 10–1 may be expressed thus: *He is in doubt;*

but his doubt will soon disappear. But the assertion made in the latter part of this statement is too strong, and requires a modifier. "Probably" would nearly express the meaning intended to be expressed by the modifier in No. 10–1. If "I am sure" is preferred as the modifier, its relation to the verb (will disappear) must be made unmistakable. It is not so made in No. 10–1, for it appears to be connected by "but" with what precedes it, just as it is connected with what precedes it in No. 10. To disconnect it, a comma precedes it; and one follows it to disconnect it from what follows.

The new relations are shown by the following punctuation:

10–2. He is in doubt about the best course for him to pursue; but, I am sure, his doubt will soon disappear.

Suppose the sentence read as follows, how would it be punctuated?

10–3. He is in doubt about the best course for him to pursue; but I am sure that his doubt will soon disappear.

This sentence cannot be punctuated. The *but* relation is here between incongruous thoughts; and therefore the sentence must be mended, which can be done by making it like No. 10–2, omitting "that."

No amount of usage, even among good writers, can justify the absence of commas in No. 10–1, or the construction of No. 10–3.

The discussion of these sentences emphasizes the necessity for observing the meaning of language as expressed by its grouping and by the relation of one group to another.

Additional light will be thrown upon some of the relations already discussed if we consider them from another viewpoint, as we shall do in the next chapter.

EXAMPLES

NOTE.—As the principles set forth in Chapters I and II will be discussed more in detail in succeeding chapters, the following examples are given as general illustrations:

1. They think as I do.
2. They think, as I do, that you are wrong.
3. Far below, the mill was heard singing merrily.
4. Far below the mill the stream dashed over the precipice.
5. As all will recognize, the methods adopted were wise methods.
6. John is, like his father, a great hunter.
7. Genius finds its own road, and carries its own lamp.
8. He who pursues pleasure only, defeats the object of his creation.
9. Father and son, prince and subject, stranger and citizen, are correlative terms.
10. While principles may abide, the phenomena in which they appear may change.
11. He has the equipment to play saint or sinner, devil or angel.
12. To the wise and good, old age presents a scene of tranquil enjoyment.
13. The people of Miletus are not stupid, but they do the sort of things that stupid people do.
14. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, Burns is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no luster but his own.

15. The high-school course includes arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; grammar and composition; ancient and modern history; geography, natural history, and astronomy.

16. If Bacon could find time to write Shakespeare, Marlow, and Greene, I see no reason why he should not have written Ben Johnson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and the whole Elizabethan drama.

17. Aristophanes, Boccacio, Moliére and Cervantes, Dickens and Mark Twain, and our weekly comic papers make us laugh anew over the same old story, told in different accents and in different syntax.

18. With one of his two boys or a friend, and a dog, Tennyson would walk afield for miles.

19. With one of his two boys, or a friend and a dog, Tennyson would walk afield for miles.

In No. 18 the comma before "and" cuts "dog" off from "friend," and makes a group of "dog" and "one of his two boys or a friend." It makes this group simply because the sense permits no other grouping. Thus the meaning of No. 18 is, that Tennyson was accompanied by a dog and a person (one of his boys or a friend).

In No. 19 another grouping is made, which says Tennyson was accompanied by one of his boys or by a friend and a dog.

CHAPTER III

MODIFIED PARENTHESIS, EXPLANATORY AND RESTRICTIVE TERMS, AFTER-THOUGHT, AND APPOSITIVES

EXPLANATORY AND RESTRICTIVE MODIFIERS

THE Greek grammarians gave the name *parenthesis* to a group of words "thrust into" language, either spoken or written, when such words have no *grammatical* connection with the language. We retain the word "parenthesis" to describe such a group, and also as the name of the curved lines with which the group is enclosed and thus identified. These lines are called *parenthesis*, *marks of parenthesis*, or *parentheses*.

Such matter is inserted for explanation or qualification; but it is not essential to the meaning of the language into which it is thrust, for matter essential to the meaning would not be so named or so marked.

The parenthesis did the ancient writers a larger service in the involved style of their composition than it does modern writers; however, in a modified form, it does the modern writer a very useful and, at times, an indispensable service.

What we may call a *modified parenthesis* (modified parenthetical matter) is found, one or more times, in almost every paragraph.

In order to clarify or explain our adopted term, "modified parenthesis," a parenthesis, enclosed in

parentheses, was used in the sentence preceding this one; and, in the same sentence, in order to qualify, in a somewhat peculiar manner, the expression "is found in every paragraph," the modified parenthetical group of words "one or more times" was inserted. We characterize this parenthesis as *somewhat peculiar*. In its literal meaning, "one or more times" adds nothing to the statement in which it appears, for whatever occurs must occur "one or more times." It does, however, add a new and perhaps subtle thought as to the frequency of the occurrence of the parenthesis.

The meanings of these terms, together with the reasons for their punctuation, will appear as we discuss illustrative examples:

11. The author says (page 5) that he did not go to London.

The words "page 5" were inserted in the above sentence by the writer himself simply as a matter of direction to the place in the book where the assertion was made. It has no grammatical connection with any part of the sentence: it is simply "thrust in"—it is "parenthetical." We may modify its strictly parenthetical nature by putting it in another form:

11–1. The author says, on page 5, that he did not go to London.

Here the expression "on page 5" has still the parenthetical nature; but it is given grammatical connection, by means of the preposition "on," to what precedes it. Thus we call it a "modified parenthesis"; or we may call it "slightly parenthetical" matter. It is obvious that the expression can be omitted in either

No. 11 or No. 11–1 without the slightest effect upon the meaning of the sentence.

If we omit the commas in No. 11–1, we give the sentence practically a new meaning; and to complete the meaning a new clause must be added:

11–2. The author says on page 5 that he did not go to London; but he says on page 6 that he did go to London.

In No. 11–2 the language is used in its natural order; and no mark is required in either clause, for each group of words has its natural or logical relation to the group or groups standing next to it. The meaning is unmistakable. But why was the comma used in No. 11–1 and not in No. 11–2? Let us note carefully that we are still dealing with the proper grouping of words and with the relations of group to group, such relations giving rise to *real* and *apparent* meanings. With the real meaning of such groups as we are now considering fully understood, we know that a mark is used to change that meaning. Thus, in the consideration of these sentences, we come back to the principle exemplified in Sentences 1 and 2. We use the commas in No. 11–1 because the real meaning of the sentence is not the same as the meaning of the same language in No. 11–2.

One or two illustrative sentences will lead us, gradually and logically, to the punctuation of a large class of sentences in which the groups of words considered have somewhat more definite names than we have given the same groups in the above sentences.

A thorough comprehension of this punctuation is often indispensable, that the writer may convey to the reader his exact meaning, which may depend

entirely upon the punctuation,—that is, upon the *absence* or the *presence* of marks:

12. Everywhere in America and England, as well as in Germany, the cry for peace is heard.

What does the language of No. 12 mean? Clearly, that in every part (everywhere) of America and in every part of England, as well as in every part of Germany, the cry for peace is heard. That is the *apparent*, and it is also the *real*, meaning of the language; but the writer may have had a different meaning in mind. If he did not wish to limit the "cry for peace" to America, England, and Germany, he would have disconnected from "everywhere" these limiting words, writing the sentence thus:

12–1. Everywhere, in America and England, as well as in Germany, the cry for peace is heard.

The use of the first comma in this grouping notifies the reader that a grouping different from the apparent grouping must be made. It also notifies him that a meaning different from that of No. 12 is to be conveyed by the new grouping. The second comma readily falls into its place; and by the same reasoning the third comma is called for.

The two groups are slightly parenthetical; and, treated as one group, they could be set off by parentheses.

12–2. Everywhere (in America and England, as well as in Germany) the cry for peace is heard.

They are not *properly* included in marks of parenthesis, because they do not constitute a pure parenthesis. They are inserted, not to explain the word

"everywhere," but for emphasis, being equivalent in meaning to *even in America*, etc. It will be observed that "everywhere," as here used, means in all parts of the world. Nothing can be added to it; and therefore what the group of words under consideration explains is, that the word is used in its inclusive and exact meaning. The marks give a shade of meaning somewhat similar to that given by commas in setting off "one or more times," discussed above.

It may be noted, in passing, that the middle (the second) comma in No. 12–1 acts with the first comma to form one group and with the third comma to form another group, thus making the three commas equivalent to two pairs of commas.

Our next sentence is an exceedingly interesting one. It has been submitted for interpretation to a number of persons, including editorial writers, authors, teachers, lawyers, and printers. Not a single one of them saw the real meaning; and, when the meaning was pointed out, not one of them could explain why the commas are used. Moreover, not one of the score or more of text-books on punctuation at hand gives a satisfactory explanation. The rules of all the books, it is true, cover the point; but the application of the rules is often so difficult as to render them valueless.

When understood, the sentence is simplicity itself, and the punctuation becomes equally simple and very informing.

The sentence (No. 13) is a part of a larger sentence taken from an essay on "Literature and Education" by Dr. Henry van Dyke, the larger sentence being one of

several directions how to determine the value of a story:

13. Ask whether the people in the story develop, for better or for worse.

Let us suggest that the reader study the sentence before proceeding with our discussion of it. Let him put the sentence in the form of a question, and apply it to any story he has recently read. What two answers could be given to the question if applied to two stories requiring different answers?

Now let us ask why the comma is used. The answer is simple, for in our study of marks we have had only *one* reason for using the comma,—namely, to show that an *apparent* meaning is not the *real* meaning. If this is the reason for the use of the comma, the reason will be exemplified by a study of the sentence without the comma:

13–1. Ask whether the people in the story develop for better or for worse.

If the meaning of each sentence is not yet clear, let us consider the group of words following the comma in No. 13 as slightly parenthetical. (a modified parenthesis). We may go a step further, and treat them as purely parenthetical, putting them in marks of parenthesis and putting the sentence in the interrogative form:

13–2. Do the people in the story develop (for better or for worse)?

Manifestly, the only answer is *yes* or *no*.

Why did Dr. van Dyke add these slightly parenthetical and apparently superfluous words (for better

or for worse) to his sentence? He added them, primarily, because he knew some, perhaps many, readers might think "develop" means only growth upward (for better), while it is just as essential for the novelist to depict characters that "develop" *downward* (for worse) as *upward.*

But what does No. 13–1 mean? If put in the form of a question, what answer can be given? Only "for better" or "for worse." This changes the meaning of the language. The first sentence (No. 13) asks whether the people in the story are static or dynamic; the second (No. 13–1) assumes that they are dynamic (they develop), and asks in what direction they develop.

Dr. van Dyke's entire sentence clearly shows the meaning of the part of it we have been considering. The sentence is as follows:

13–3. Ask whether the people in the story develop, for better or for worse, and how far the change is credible and significant.

The groups of words we have been considering in Sentences 11 to 13–3 are either *restrictive* or *explanatory* groups, with the functions of nouns, adjectives, or adverbs, and with the relations that these parts of speech take in the construction of language.

The meanings of the terms "restrictive" and "explanatory" will appear as we consider other sentences; and the differentiation in the punctuation of restrictive and explanatory groups will be plain.

Our next sentence will serve a twofold purpose: first, to show how difficult it is to punctuate a sen-

tence out of its context; and, secondly, to show that a sentence may be given two meanings by punctuation:

14. The boy who is at home is my best pupil.
14–1. The boy, who is at home, is my best pupil.

The person who is thoroughly familiar with the *reasons* for the use of marks can interpret these sentences; and he can also construct a context requiring the commas or their omission. On the other hand, one not familiar with such reasons could probably do neither.

The value of this knowledge is quite inestimable. Because of ignorance of it on the part of legislators, our courts have been required to determine the meanings of municipal, state, and national laws involving vital social relations and vast financial interests.

Applying the general principles already discussed, we say that the first comma in No. 14–1 is to show that the relation between "boy" and "who is my best pupil" is not the same relation that exists between the same groups in No. 14. But why is this? Let us construct contexts for the sentences, and then study them in the light of the information thus obtained.

Suppose a visitor to a school asks the teacher about a certain class, and the teacher replies as follows:

14–2. The class is composed of six boys. The boy who is at home is my best pupil.

The group of words "who is at home" is an adjective; and the meaning of the noun with the qualification made by the adjective may be thus expressed: *the at-home boy.* In this form the group specifies *what* boy, and so *restricts* the boy named as to mean a certain, definite boy.

We here take the language in its natural order, and obtain a definite and clearly understood meaning.

Another context will show a different relation. The teacher replies as follows:

14–3. The class is composed of one boy and five girls. The boy, who is at home, is my best pupil.

Because of the context, "the boy" needs no identification, no restrictive words to explain who is meant. The sentence could be written thus:

14–4. The class is composed of one boy and five girls. The boy (he is at home) is my best pupil.

In the above sentence the group of words in parentheses *explains*; but it is not *restrictive*. It tells something about the boy; but it does not tell *what* boy, for this information is given in what precedes, which says there is only one boy. In No. 14–3 this group of words is slightly changed, and is given grammatical connection by its form, and thus it becomes only *slightly* parenthetical.

In Nos. 14 and 14–2 the meaning is not complete without the *restrictive* words. In Nos. 14–1, 14–3, and 14–4 these words are not essential to identify the boy, being added simply by way of explanation, hence they are called *explanatory*.

In the consideration of the terms *explanatory* and *restrictive*, much confusion arises from the fact that a restrictive group may also be an explanatory group. A purely *explanatory* group, which requires commas to set it off, is never a *restrictive* group. This confusion can be entirely avoided by calling the groups *restrictive* and *non-restrictive*. The

latter group is set off by commas because it conveys a different meaning from that of a restrictive group, and also because it is "slightly parenthetical," that is, parenthetical in nature, but with grammatical connection.

Not a few writers use the marks of parenthesis or dashes, instead of commas, to set off a non-restrictive (explanatory) group; but, as their writings reveal no differentiation in the uses of these three marks, their system of punctuation is a wholly hit-or-miss one.

Because of the extent and importance of restrictive and non-restrictive groups of words, another like illustrative sentence, with its variations, seems worth while:

15. The committee is composed of women who are not voters.

15–1. The committee is composed of women, who are not voters.

15–2. The committee is composed of men who are not voters.

15–3. The committee is composed of men, who are not voters.

What do these sentences really assert and what meanings do they convey? Let us consider the answers to this question quite fully, and make them a test of all restrictive and non-restrictive groups.

No. 15 says the members of the committee are not voters, implying that other women are voters. The members of the committee might not be voters because of age, non-residence, etc.

No. 15–1 says all women are not voters,—that is, no women are voters. The group "who are not voters" is explanatory of women.

No. 15–2 is the same as No. 15.

No. 15–3 is the same as No. 15–1; but, as men enjoy universal political suffrage, the statement in No. 15–3 is somewhat more striking than that made in No. 15–1, and therefore we must seek conditions giving sanction to such an assertion. For instance, a woman's society might admit men to honorary membership in the society without the privilege of voting. If a committee was composed of such men, the statement made in No. 15–3 would be applicable.

Our next three sentences are perhaps more typical of the sentences met in general reading:

16. In 1826, an edition of this work, designed solely for printers, was first published.

Mr. Teall quotes the above sentence, among others from books on punctuation, and says that the commas setting off "designed solely for printers" should be omitted.

The sentence is from a late edition of Mr. Wilson's work; and it shows that author's discriminating use of marks. The omission of the commas would entirely change the meaning of the language. The meaning of the language may be more clearly expressed as follows:

16–1. In 1826, the first edition of this work was published, and was designed solely for printers.

With the commas omitted the meaning of the sentence would be as follows:

16–2. In 1826, the first edition of this work designed solely for printers, was published.

Sentences 16 and 16–1 say that the first edition of the work was published in 1826. Sentence 16, with the commas omitted, as Mr. Teall says they should be, and Sentence 16–2 say the first *printers'* edition was published in 1826; and they imply that other editions not designed solely for printers were previously published. As no such edition was published, Mr. Teall is in error, and Mr. Wilson's punctuation (No. 16) is correct.

Many writers set off such *explanatory* or *slightly parenthetical* modifiers by parentheses, as illustrated in Sentence 12–2; other writers use dashes for this purpose. As we shall show later, neither mark finds sanction in punctuation by reason.

17. In medicine the anesthetic of choice is chloroform or ether; in dentistry it is laughing-gas, or nitrous oxide.

The conjunction "or" appears twice in the above sentence. In the first clause it stands between two words, one of which is excluded when the other is selected, just as if written "either chloroform or ether." In the second clause a new relation between the words is set up. Here the apparent meaning is not the real meaning.

In this second group the words following "or" are explanatory of the word preceding "or." One anesthetic with two names is spoken of. The comma notifies the reader that the relation in the second group is not the relation existing in the first,—that is, the apparent relation in the second group is not the *real* relation.

Many writers would put "or nitrous oxide" in

parentheses. The meaning would be unmistakable; but the punctuation is not commendable, as we have already seen. "Nitrous oxide," without the "or," could properly be enclosed in parentheses.

AFTERTHOUGHT

There is a very common use of the comma before "or" which reveals a nice meaning of language. The punctuation grows out of a writer's desire to modify a meaning which he has expressed, frequently, in a word that is too strong. He follows this word with another in the *or* relation to the too-strong word. In order to show that the real *or* relation, as discussed under No. 17, does not exist between the two words, and that the relation of explanation (slightly parenthetical), as discussed under No. 11, is the *real* relation, he applies the principle of disjunction, exhibited in another form in the discussion of Sentence 1, and uses the comma.

In our first illustrative sentence (No. 17A) the fact that a word of milder, not coördinate, meaning is to follow "or," is indicated both by the group of words (I should say) and by the modifier (even) preceding the word in the *or* relation to "independent." The comma before "or" would be required in the absence of either or both of these modifiers, as shown in Nos. 17A–1 and 17A–2. It is especially needed in No. 17A–2 to distinguish the *real* from the *apparent* meaning:

17A. This capital does not make him independent, or, I should say, even aspiring.

17A–1. This capital does not make him independent, or even aspiring.

17A–2. This capital does not make him independent, or aspiring.

The word or words used in modification of an idea expressed either too strongly or too weakly, are aptly called an "afterthought"; and such word or words themselves suggest the parenthetical nature of the added language.

Our next illustrative sentence shows the use of a word that is too weak; and therefore the sense requires a stronger word. The sentence is particularly interesting because it is a type of sentences that are almost invariably punctuated wrong, even by our best writers:

18. It is a matter of whim, or, worse, of economy.

The word "worse" is introduced to characterize what follows. It is a short form of "what is worse." It requires a comma before it to cut it off from "or," and a comma after it to cut it off from what follows. When cut off, the sense relation between "whim" and "economy" is made unmistakable. But sentences of this type are, as stated above, almost invariably punctuated wrong; and the sense relations are thus obscured. The wrong punctuation is as follows:

18–1. It is a matter of whim, or worse, of economy.

In the next illustrative sentence (No. 18A) the new word is simply one that more nearly expresses the writer's meaning. The comma before "or" is clearly required; but why put a comma after "easier"?

18A. It belongs in the lower, or, as it would be better to call it, the easier, grades of work.

The comma after "easier" acts with the comma before "or" to suspend what comes between "lower"

and "grades," just as a similar group of words is suspended in Sentence 3–1.

OR and AND

The relations expressed by "or" and "and" are so nearly identical that every rule or principle of punctuation requiring a mark before one of them requires it before the other in similarly formed sentences. Only an occasional use of "and" expresses a shade of meaning like that expressed by "or" in the above sentences. For this reason it may be well to caution the student against the common error of using a comma before "and" in a sentence formed like No. 18A, but not like it in meaning:

18A–1. We are not willing to give our sanction to the broad and, when applied in a case like that at bar, harsh rule of instruction.

APPOSITIVES

A class of words called "appositives" falls under the classification and reasoning we have been considering; and an example or two will suffice to show this:

19. The word, eagle, is derived from the Latin.
19–1. The word *eagle* is derived from the Latin.

In No. 19 "eagle" is used to explain what word, and might very properly go into the class of words that we have called purely parenthetical. It seems to be more closely allied to the class of appositives, and thus takes a grammatical relation which makes it slightly parenthetical, or explanatory.

In No. 19 "word" is the subject of the sentence; "eagle" shows with what "word" we are dealing. In No. 19–1 "word" is adjectival in meaning, and can

no more take a comma than can "good" in "good man." "Eagle," as a word, is the subject of the sentence.

19–2. His son John did all the work on the farm.

19–3. His son, John, did all the work on the farm.

In No. 19–2 we are told that *one* of his sons, named "John," did the work. In No. 19–3 we are told that his son, not his daughter nor *one* of his sons, did the work. "John" is simply explanatory, as is "who is at home" in No. 14–3.

In Nos. 19 and 19–3 we have language that expresses a different meaning from that expressed in Nos. 19–1 and 19–2; and therefore we use the commas to show that the *apparent* meaning of the two former sentences is not the *real* meaning of the two latter.

VOCATIVES

Likewise the so-called vocatives, or words of address, come, though somewhat indirectly, under this same classification and reasoning:

19B. Ring out, wild bells.

If expressed in full, the sentence would read as follows:

19B–1. Ring ye, wild bells, out.

Here "wild bells" is merely an appositive of the subject, "ye," which is understood in No. 19B.

EXAMPLES

1. I shall be there when the train arrives.

1–1. I shall be there at two o'clock, when the train arrives.

2. You will find the word in the index, at the back of the book.

2–1. You will find the word in the index on page 111.

3. He preached his first sermon, in Brooklyn, July 20, 1895.

3–1. He preached his first sermon in Brooklyn July 20, 1895.

4. His creditors wanted to know what resources, in cash and credits, he had.

4–1. His creditors wanted to know what resources in cash and credits he had.

5. Were my statements plain? They were, as usual.

6. You will deduct from the deposit, or deposits, the amount due you.

7. At this time my entire force mustered less than 50,000 men, of all arms.

8. He has affection for all men, whom he knows to be his brothers, whether they love or hate him.

9. On the Western frontier there was no place for the unemployed, rich or poor.

10. The injured vessel was able to proceed, under reduced speed, to her destination.

10–1. The new type of engine will enable vessels to run under high speed, however great the storm may be.

11. One can never read a book, and like it, or dislike it, and keep the fact to himself.

12. Many persons are out of work because they are unwilling or unable, or both, to do the work they can get to do.

13. The central quality of manliness, around which all others must be built up, is that of a sense of honor.

14. That such a sentiment should ever have been believed, or expressed, is proof of how prone the human mind is to mistake a coincidence for a cause.

15. Artemus Ward's happy saying, that on a certain occasion he tried to do too much, and did it, exactly fits the program of these men.

16. Architecture is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man, for whatever uses, that the sight of them contributes to his mental health, power, and pleasure.

17. The ancient Greeks, who were intellectual, and the ancient Romans, who were warlike, agree upon this point.

18. I leave today on the train for home, where I hope to be, thankful for a safe journey, on Monday.

19. When our deeds and motives come to be balanced at the last day, let us hope that mercy, and not justice, may prevail.

20. The physician says the case presents a classical picture of atrophy, or marasmus.

21. The warning of the ship's danger came from a whistling buoy, or, as it is technically called, a siren.

22. The expression "It is worth a Jew's eye" is proverbial, and probably dates from the middle ages.

23. You gentlemen must solve this problem.

23–1. You, gentlemen, must solve this problem.

24. The trouble grows less, or ceases altogether, during the winter.

25. We should not forget how confidently and how frequently his failure was predicted.

25–1. We should not forget how confidently, and how mistakenly, his failure was predicted.

Why do we use commas in No. 25–1, and not in No. 25? In No. 25, "confidently" and "frequently" are coördinate in sense, and are bound together to complete a thought. In No. 25–1 "confidently" and "mistakenly" are not coördinate in sense, and express quite different thoughts. "Mistakenly" is an afterthought, a slightly parenthetical word, and here stands in an *apparent* relation to another word, which relation the comma shows is not its real relation.

26. Mr. Smith promises this magazine another article which cannot fail to be interesting.

26–1. Mr. Smith promises this magazine another article, which cannot fail to be interesting.

In No. 26 the *kind* of article to be furnished is described; and an uninteresting article will not fulfill the promise. In No. 26–1 *any* article furnished will fulfill the promise; if it is an uninteresting one, the *prediction* made as to the kind of article in No. 26–1 has failed.

27. Every foot of ground from London to Land's End was examined by him.

27–1. Every foot of England, from John o' Groat's to Land's End, was examined by him.

In No. 27 the ground is defined or *restricted* by the group of words that follows London. In No. 27–1 the group of words following "England" is a mere repetition, one point named being at one end of England, and the other point at the opposite end. This group of words is added as an afterthought, and to give a certain degree of emphasis to the assertion by making its language literal, inclusive, and not general.

28. After we had dined, or supped, royally, the old lady told me a story of Alice Brand.

28–1. After we had dined, or supped royally, the old lady told me a story of Alice Brand.

What difference in meaning does the difference in punctuation give in the above sentences? And which is the better punctuation?

No. 28 says the meal was a *royal* one. The word *supped* is added, as an afterthought, in order to define the meal as an *evening* meal, for the word "dined" signifies to many a *midday* meal. No. 28–1 defines the meal as worthy to be called a *dinner*, the principle meal of the day, or a *royal* supper, that is, a meal far above what one expects in a mere *supper*.

In No. 28 we "dined royally" or "supped royally"; in No. 28–1 "we dined" or "we supped royally."

The punctuation is correct in each example; but the mode of expressing the meaning conveyed by No. 28–1 is rather fantastic.

29. The defendant, Baker, was a party to the contract.

29–1. Defendant Baker was a party to the contract.

30. The difficulty of defining the word *vulgarity* precisely, arises from the fact that, like most vehement and expressive words, it covers a large variety of meanings, and is tinged with different kinds of contempt.

CHAPTER IV

GROUPING DONE BY THE SEMICOLON AND THE COLON

THUS far in our discussion we have considered grouping done by commas only, except incidentally in Sentences 6, 6–2, 7, 7–1, and 7–2. We shall now consider the application of our fundamental principle to grouping that requires the semicolon and the colon.

Our first illustrative sentence (No. 20) is from a distinguished writer, noted for the "infinite care he gives to his diction." We think the sentence decidedly distracting:

20. I have an arrangement to do a serial for Harper's, and a series of wayside pieces for Scribner's, Smith illustrating, is on the tapis.

Probably very few persons, in reading the above sentence at sight, would take notice from the first comma that the sentence is here divided into two shorter sentences (the grammarians call these sentence-parts *clauses*). In the absence of such notice, the reader goes on to "is" before discovering the real relation of the group of words following "and." The comma before "and" does not clearly show that "and" connects the two larger groups of the sentence, and so gives notice to the reader that the first group, which is one of the clauses, is complete; nor, in the

absence of such notice, is the reader told that the words immediately following "and" look forward, instead of backward, for their completion as a group.

The confusion or uncertainty of grouping is here further increased by the character of the two groups between which "and" appears to stand. Each begins with the same word (a), thus making them appear to be coördinate groups; and each group appears to be the object of "do."

Perhaps the author would contend that the comma before "and" is sufficient to give notice of the proper grouping, just as we used a comma for a somewhat similar grouping in Sentence 1–1. Such contention would not be without merit; but Sentence 1–1 is much shorter, and the consequent liability to make the wrong grouping is much less. Our discussion might thus end in a difference of opinion without determining the degree of separation requiring a mark of higher rank than the comma. The discussion could be opened by an admission on our part that a semicolon in No. 1–1 would be better than the comma; for its warning of the change of grouping would be unmistakable by any reader.

Two reasons may be given for the use of the comma in No. 1–1, instead of the semicolon; and we give them in order to emphasize the fact that we cannot always have in language one degree of separation that calls unmistakably for the comma, and another degree that calls unmistakably for the semicolon. The reasons for the use of the comma in No. 1–1 are as follows:

1. As the sentence is very short, the eye readily

catches the relation requiring the grouping that carries "their mothers" forward for its connection, instead of backward to "children."

2. The use of a semicolon in this sentence might seem to justify a rule requiring a semicolon in every sentence composed of two clauses, while convention hardly justifies such punctuation. On the other hand, if we prefer the use of the semicolon in No. 1–1, under what conditions would the comma be preferred? If what immediately follows the conjunction between any two clauses, especially short ones, does not suggest connection with what precedes, a comma before the conjunction gives sufficient notice of the grouping of the language into two clauses.

Thus we have forced upon us, at least apparently, the necessity of making choice in many sentences between the comma and the semicolon. The problem is further complicated by the need of the different classes of readers for whom the marks in language are used, and still further by convention.

The proper punctuation of No. 20 is as follows:

20–1. I have an arrangement to do a serial for Harper's; and a series of wayside pieces for Scribner's, Smith illustrating, is on the tapis.

Our next sentence is particularly interesting because of its character and its source. It is from a book by a distinguished literary man, who is the professor of English in one of our leading universities and the author of a text-book on English composition. The book from which the sentence is taken was printed at The Riverside Press, which has long been considered by many to be the best printing-office in the world:

21. The deliberate good sense with which Franklin treated matters of religion and morality, he displayed equally in his scientific writings; and, a little later, in his public documents and correspondence,[1] which made him as eminent in diplomacy and statecraft as he had earlier been in science and in local affairs.

In No. 20–1 we use a semicolon expressly to show that what immediately follows the mark looks forward for its connection; and, it seems to us, the semicolon in No. 21 cannot fail to give to any reader, with or without much knowledge of marks, notice that a complete new group, and not an additional part of the preceding group, is to follow the semicolon. If the reader is looking forward for a new group (a clause), the ending of the sentence gives him a surprise, and compels him to read over the entire sentence to make the proper grouping.

It is difficult to say just what notice a comma before "and" in Sentence 21 would give most readers. Let us so punctuate it, and challenge the comma. What will its answer be? This, of course, is a question that the reader puts to himself, testing his own knowledge of the marks. In the light of our discussion of Sentence 1, the comma might seem to say that "and" does not connect "writings" with some noun to follow. We shall see, later in our discussion, that a comma may be necessary in a grouping almost like this; but in this sentence the reader has another aid, in fact two others, thus making the comma unnecessary, if not objectionable. The word "equally," which comes before "in his scientific writings," raises

[1] A comma at this point does not appear in the original. We insert it because what follows is clearly explanatory.

the expectation of a similar group to follow and to be introduced by a suitable connecting word. As "and" is such a word, the absence of a mark of punctuation before it at once suggests that a like group is to follow. The second aid to the reader in the process of grouping is the word "in," which introduces each of the groups connected by "and," and identifies the second group as the coördinate of the first.

We punctuate to aid the reader quickly to grasp *through the eye* the groupings of printed language, and to enable him to determine the relations between the groups thus formed. When a mark is not needed for this purpose, it may be omitted.

If we say *the man is in a bad state of mind and in an equally bad state of body*, the eye catches the words "and" and "in," at the end of the line, practically at the same instant. The "in" tells of the grouping so distinctly that a comma is not needed to inform the reader that no word follows "and" to be connected by it to "mind." Therefore we say, when groups are so similarly formed that the word following the conjunction gives ample notice of the grouping, a comma is not needed. We shall consider this point more fully in another place.

By a slight change in the wording of No. 21, we get a counterpart of the illustrative grouping just given:

21–1. He displayed good judgment in his scientific writings and in his public documents.

The grouping here is so unmistakable as to make a comma before "and" quite objectionable. It is

unmistakable because of the like formation of the groups, and also because of the absence of any word after "and" that suggests a wrong relation to what precedes.

Now, if we do introduce a word or two between "and" and "in," and such words do not suggest relation to what precedes, we may still omit the comma before "and." This reasoning, with that above, suggests the best punctuation of No. 21, which is as follows:

21–2. The deliberate good sense with which Franklin treated matters of religion and morality, he displayed equally in his scientific writings and, a little later, in his public documents and correspondence, which made him as eminent in diplomacy and statecraft as he had earlier been in science and local affairs.

Thus we find no need of any mark before "and" in this sentence, where a painstaking writer uses a semicolon.

As "and," even in No. 21–1, does not connect "writings" with "documents," but connects the two groups of words beginning with "in," the adjective clause in No. 21–2 beginning with "which" can hardly go over into the first group, and there find a noun which it may seem to modify.

To illustrate how puzzling a rule may be, and how wrong, we quote the following rule from Mr. Wilson's work (page 113):

When a sentence consists of three or more clauses, united by a conjunction, none of which are susceptible of division, a semicolon should be put between those

which are least connected in sense, and a comma only between the others.

To illustrate this rule, the following sentence is given in Mr. Wilson's book (the italics are ours):

22. The woods may disappear, *but* the spirit of them never will now; *for* it has been felt by a poet, *and* we can feel for ever[1] what he felt.

Does the punctuation indicate the real sense relations in this sentence? We think not. The semicolon before "for" divides the sentence into two parts; but what follows the semicolon is clearly not in the *for* relation with all that precedes it, as it should be if the sentence is divided into two parts at this point. The sense relation expressed by "for" is unmistakably between all that follows it and what precedes it back to "but."

The real division of the sentence into two parts is made at "but," as shown in the following:

22–1. The woods may disappear, but the spirit of them never will now.

Expanding the above, to emphasize the relations, but still maintaining the sense of No. 22, we get the following:

22–2. The woods may disappear, for they are material and will decay; but the spirit of them never will now, for it has been felt by a poet and we can feel forever what he felt.

In No. 22–2 we added a commonplace modifier to the first statement in the sentence, in order to

[1] As Sentence 22 is a quotation, we retain its two-word form of "forever," which is the English style; but in No 22-2. which is our own language, we use the one-word form, which is the American style.

exhibit more clearly the similar relation between two like groups in the second part of the sentence, which take a semicolon in the quoted sentence (No. 22).

Punctuated so as to show the real sense relations, the sentence reads as follows:

22–3. The woods may disappear: but the spirit of them never will now; for it has been felt by a poet, and we can feel forever what he felt.

A thorough comprehension of the groupings in these sentences, which is based upon sense relations, will illuminate the punctuation already discussed. It will also explain some apparent, if not real, inconsistencies that are inevitable in dealing with marks to express indefinite degrees of relation.

Sentence 1 is composed of two clauses connected by a conjunction, as is also Sentence 22–1. The liability to error in grouping Sentence 1 may be sufficient to require a semicolon; but the grouping in Sentence 22–1 is so unmistakable that a comma is sufficient to give notice of a change in the direction of the thought. In Sentence 21 the semicolon gives notice of a grouping which does not follow. In Sentence 22 the grouping by punctuation does not follow the meaning of the language, and is therefore wrong.

Wrong grouping is perhaps most common in sentences containing groups requiring coördinate conjunctions, such as "and" and "but." Quite often such sentences cannot be so punctuated as to show the correct grouping by the marks. The following sentence is an example:

23. The Society has expelled two of its members for unprofessional conduct, and has investigated complaints

against two other members, but it has been unable to obtain enough evidence to convict them.

This is not bad punctuation, for it conveys the meaning, which, however, is not difficult to obtain; but it is not good punctuation, for the marks do not group the words in accordance with the sense relations that exist between the groups.

If the sentence were divided into two parts by "but," the *but* relation would exist between what follows and *each* of the groups of words coördinated by the conjunction "and." Thus we would say, "The Society has expelled four of its members for unprofessional conduct, but *has been unable to obtain enough evidence to convict them.*" As this relation does not make sense, we know that the "but" relation exists between what follows it and what precedes it back to "and." As the *but* relation does not extend beyond "and," this fact should be shown by the mark, thus requiring a larger mark (semicolon) before "and." But a semicolon before "and" would separate two closely connected groups (predicates),—"has expelled" and "has investigated." It would also connect the second group with the third, making one larger group in the *and* relation with the first.

As the sense relations here require a grouping inconsistent with the grammatical relations, a change in the language becomes necessary before it can be properly punctuated:

23–1. The Society has expelled two of its members for unprofessional conduct; and *it* has investigated complaints against two other members, but has been unable to obtain enough evidence to convict them.

The insertion of "it" (a new subject) after "and," and its omission after "but," with the proper use of the semicolon, make clear the two things done by the Society, and make this clear by the proper grouping of words to show the unmistakable thought-grouping.

If we are required to punctuate language which we are not permitted to change, our punctuation may have to depart from our system, whether established by rule or by reason. A study of such punctuation will lead to a nice discrimination in both marks and relations. Our next sentence, with its different modes of punctuation, will illustrate the point. The sentence is given in three forms: (1) as it appeared in a literary journal; (2) as it is printed in the Common Version of the New Testament (2 Timothy i, 16); and (3) as it is printed in the Revised Version. We shall, however, not follow its division into two verses, as it appears in the Common Version of the Bible:

24. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently, and found me.

24–1. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

24–2. The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently, and found me.

In each of these three sentences the punctuation divides the language into three larger groups of words,

two of which are subdivided by commas. In the second and third a colon indicates a second grouping of each sentence into two main parts, but not at the same point. If the semicolons and the colons were challenged for their meanings, the answers would show an interesting variety of grouping of words, as well as a variety of sense relations. Such a variety of punctuation is common only because the actual significance of marks, in their grouping and relational effects, has not been considered.

These sentences present the same problem, though somewhat further complicated, that was presented by Nos. 22 and 23. We have only to ask ourselves how far the *but*, *for*, and *and* relations extend. Do the marks so group the words as to indicate the sense relations by the grouping? Of course they do not, as is shown by the difference in the groupings. In No. 24 neither semicolon shows how far the *for* or the *but* relation extends; and therefore neither mark is an efficient sign-board. If challenged for a meaning, neither could give the reader an intelligent answer.

In each of Nos. 24–1 and 24–2 the colon makes another grouping, dividing each sentence into two still larger groups. Here each mark would give a definite answer to a challenge; but both answers could not be correct. The sentence is unmistakably divided into two parts, the first part ending with "Onesiphorus." Mercy is sought for him because of what he did; and what he did is specified in the language that follows "for." The extent of the *for* relation, therefore, must be shown by the mark. A colon will clearly show that it goes to the end of the sentence, as a like relation was shown by the colon in No. 6–2.

We now have to deal with the proper grouping of all that follows "for"; but we cannot use a colon for this purpose because, having been used once, a second colon in the same sentence would confuse the whole grouping. We thus come to a serious difficulty, which arises out of the number of groups to be made with the marks (comma and semicolon) left at our disposal. This difficulty would be even greater in No. 24–2 had we quoted the sentence in full, the complete verse containing another clause. In the second of the two larger groups we have an *and* and a *but* relation exactly like the *and* and *but* relations in No. 23, which we could not indicate by marks. As we may not change the language of the sentence under consideration, we must punctuate it with as little violence to the meanings of marks as possible. Probably the clearest punctuation of the sentence would be as follows:

24–3. The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain, but, when he was in Rome, he sought me very diligently, and found me.

As the sentence is thus divided into two main parts, with only commas in one part, the semicolon is sufficient to mark the larger groups. As the comma before "but" does not suggest to the reader how far back the *but* relation extends, he is left to ascertain it without the aid of a mark definitely pointing it out.

We do not claim this to be good punctuation, but we think it the best the sentence will permit. The sentence seems to show the fault of bad grouping.

If we are ever in doubt as to how far back a rela-

tion, indicated or to be indicated by a mark before the conjunction, extends, we can easily determine this by forming the relation between the words *apparently* thus connected. Take, for instance, Sentence 24. The *for* relation between "give mercy" and "was not ashamed" is just as evident as the *for* relation between "give mercy" and "he oft refreshed me." We can say "give mercy, for he oft refreshed me" and "give mercy, for he was not ashamed."

Let us attempt to make a like grouping to determine how far back the *but* relation extends. It appears to extend to the two preceding groups, which, being connected by "and" and put between two semicolons, constitute one group. This would give us "was not ashamed, but sought me" and[1] "refreshed me, but sought me." The sense, of course, shows that the second group is not a proper group.

A writer, as we shall see later, should always guard against using a conjunction between words or groups of words not bearing to each other the relation indicated by such conjunction. Much confusion in punctuation arises from an effort to indicate by the use of marks relations that are not sense relations, as in the sentences just considered.

A somewhat different, but even more effective, grouping is shown by another use of the colon; but, very singularly, practically all writers on punctuation seem to ignore this use. Before considering it, we shall take up the colon's conventional use, which is

[1]No mark is used here before "and" because it connects two groups of words, each used as a whole, as indicated by marks of quotation.

that of the "formal" introduction of any matter, such as particulars, a speech, or a quotation:

25. I purchased the following articles: one dozen pens, one ream of paper, and one box of envelopes.

25–1. The speaker arose, and addressed the audience as follows:

"The occasion which brings us together," etc.

25–2. The speaker said: "The occasion which brings us together," etc.

It is difficult to find a reason for this use of the colon, inasmuch as what follows the colon in any of the above sentences, is not a "limb" of the sentence. The relation in No. 25 is clearly that of apposition; and it is the same in Nos. 25–1 and 25–2. In the latter the apposition is between some word not expressed, but understood, and what follows,—for example, "addressed the audience *in language* such as follows," "the speaker said *these things*."

We have called this the "conventional" use because it has become the accepted punctuation. We introduce it here in order to show that this same relation (apposition) governs in a frequent use of this mark which is not explained by the writers on punctuation.

Before passing to this use of the colon, let us make sure that the meaning of "formal introduction" is quite clear to us. It means that the matter following the colon is announced or suggested in a manner somewhat similar to the announcement made in the words *viz.*, *as follows*, etc. It thus implies that the matter is introduced according to a *form*. "He said," followed by a colon, is one of the usual conventional forms; but *he said that* is not so considered, and no mark at all follows "said."

We use a colon throughout this work at the end of the line preceding an example if the example illustrates what *precedes*. This use of the colon ties the example to what precedes. See the colon preceding Sentence 25, above.

It is also to be noted that the colon loses, in this formal and conventional use, its *relative* value, that is, its rank above the comma and the semicolon. Thus it often appears in only one or in both of the semicolon-divided groups of a sentence:

25–3. In a bill of exchange there are three original parties: drawer, drawee, and payee; in a promissory note, only two parties: the maker and the payee.

Here we see that the colons are used to group each one of the two parts into which the sentence is divided by a *semicolon*. We shall show later (Sentence 33) what we consider a much better mode of punctuating such sentences, and thus avoiding the appearance of making the colon subordinate to the semicolon.

We are here seeking to exhibit the relation of apposition. When words or groups of words stand in this relation, the second word or group expresses in another form what is expressed in the first word or group of words. In No. 25 what follows the colon is the same as "articles," which precedes it. If the word "articles" were omitted, the colon would still be used, "articles" or a like word being understood, as some word is understood in Nos. 25–1 and 25–2. The same relation is shown in Sentence 32–2 by means of parentheses.

With this understanding of the relation between groups separated by the colon, our next illustrative

sentence is particularly interesting, not only because of its character, but because of its source. As punctuated, it fails to show a nice meaning in language which is quite easily overlooked in the absence of the proper distinguishing mark; and it is from a letter by Thomas Bailey Aldrich in reply to one, from a friend, which he could not decipher. It appears in the foremost printers' magazine in the country, a magazine that often discusses the subject of punctuation:

26. There is a singular and a perpetual charm in a letter of yours; it never grows old; it never loses its novelty.

The use of two semicolons, dividing this sentence into three clauses, signifies that these clauses are in like relation to each other,—that is, that they are coördinate in sense. If the *and* or the *or* relation exists between the first and second clauses, it must exist between the second and third, just as it exists between the three items named in the second part of No. 25.

A very slight examination of the meaning of the language of this sentence shows that the clauses are not coördinate in sense, although such coördination is indicated by the use of the same mark between them.

The relation between the second and third clauses is exhibited in the following:

26–1. It never grows old; and it never loses its novelty.

We cannot unite the first and second clauses in this way, and retain the real meaning of the language; nor have we, thus far in our study, found a meaning of the semicolon that would give the reader

notice of the relation between the first clause of No. 26 and what follows. The second and third clauses of this sentence are as plainly explanatory of the first clause as are the items that follow the colon in No. 25 explanatory of "articles." A change in the wording of the sentence will show that it is exactly similar in its relation to No. 25:

26–2. Your letter possesses the following singular and perpetual charms: youthfulness and novelty.

If this relation exists between the principal thought and the detailed items, then we may indicate it by the colon, thus dividing the sentence into two groups with the relation of apposition between them:

26–3. There is a singular and a perpetual charm in a letter of yours: it never grows old; it never loses its novelty.

Let us note how carefully language is used in this sentence: the letter possesses a *singular* charm (it never loses its novelty) and a *perpetual* charm (it never grows old).

The colon both groups the language and shows the relation (apposition) between the two main groups. On the other hand, the semicolon in this sentence stands where the sense relation is the *and* relation.

It is not quite proper to say that the second and third clauses are explanatory simply of "charm": they are explanatory of the entire first clause, repeating and expanding the thought expressed in that clause, just as what follows the colon in the sentence we are writing explains what precedes.

Our next illustrative sentence is from one of Howell's novels, which was printed at The Riverside

Press. It has the fault of No. 26, and the added fault of an indefinite *but* relation:

27. He was not candid; he did not shun concealments and evasions; but positive lies he had kept from.

The second clause is clearly explanatory of the first; and the third clause simply modifies the second by showing the degree of untruthfulness of the man.

With the new meaning of the colon we are now considering, a colon after "candid" informs the reader of the relation between the main groups of the sentence:

27–1. He was not candid: he did not shun concealments and evasions; but positive lies he had kept from.

So far as the mere grouping is concerned, this could be done in Nos. 26 and 27 by a semicolon and a comma in each; but the semicolon would not inform the reader of the true relation between the two larger groups. The colon would still be required if the next two groups took a comma, or even no mark, between them.

We called this relation that of apposition. We might say, somewhat more specifically, that the second group is an amplification in language to express an extension of the idea, or to fortify the image, of the first group. This purpose may also be accomplished by a contrast between the ideas expressed in the two groups.

The writer on punctuation who says, as do many such writers, that the colon is an obsolete mark, except in its formal use for enumeration, does so, we believe, in ignorance of the useful and beautiful purpose it performs in a very large class of sentences.

EXAMPLES

1. There is purpose in pain; otherwise it were devilish.

2. But not thieves; nor robbers; nor mobs; nor rioters, insurgents, or rebels.

3. The people's voice is odd; it is, and it is not, the voice of God.

4. He cared little for poetry; fact, and not fancy, satisfied him.

5. The second Folio, reprinted from the first, was published in 1632; the third Folio, in 1664; and the fourth, in 1685.

6. Wealth has greatly accumulated; machinery has come to do a large part of our work; and all sorts of people have more or less leisure on their hands.

7. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

8. The evils are very real, grave, and widespread; whether a trifle more or less so than these rough estimates make out, is of small account.

9. His condition was not toxic; for he had never been a worker in paints, minerals, or other poisonous substances, and he did not use alcohol or tobacco.

10. There is no roughness in his manners, although he has certainly not been brought up to the ways of what is generally known as good society; and his smile is winning and sweet.

11. His fidelity was unconditional, unobtrusive, uncomplaining; he was willing to give much and receive little; he consented even to be forgotten, while he never forgot.

12. "I lived with words," Mr. Stevenson says; and the result is that formal excellence to which we have now grown accustomed, but which dazzled our judgment at the outset.

13. The order leaves only a few hundred places, below those filled by Presidential appointment and Senatorial confirmation and above the grade of laborers and scullions, for the politicians to quarrel over.

14. Sin and misery appealed most strongly to Holmes, but he invariably saw hope; and despair, that stalks through life making a tragedy of the common event to break the universal heart, had no claim upon his pen.

15. Turner's studies of Carthage represent the death that attends the vain pursuit of wealth; his studies of Rome, the death that attends the vain pursuit of power; his studies of Venice, the death that attends the vain pursuit of beauty.

16. The Scotchman of the world, the gay puritan, insists upon the few articles of his belief when he is openly preaching, as in "A Christmas Sermon"; or covertly preaching, as in "Old Mortality"; or sketching and traveling, as with a donkey.

17. Ruskin says that in a kindly and well-bred society, if anybody tries to please them, they try to be pleased; if anybody tries to astonish them, they have the courtesy to be astonished; if people become tiresome, they ask somebody to sing or play: but they do not criticise.

18. Such a household as that of Zacharias and Elizabeth would have all that was beautiful in the

religion of the time: devotion towards God; a home of affection and purity; reverence towards all that was sacred in things divine and human; ungrudging, self-denying, loving charity to the poor; the tenderest regard for the feelings of others, so as not to raise a blush, nor to wound their hearts; above all, intense faith and hope in the higher and better future of Israel.

19. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me.

As the *for* relation is here unmistakable, it should be made so at a glance in the punctuation by the use of a comma before "for" or by a colon after "slept."

20. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The above is the punctuation of the Common Version of Isaiah xi, 7. The American Revised Version uses a semicolon instead of the colon, thus making a series of the three groups of words. We think the latter poor punctuation, because the first and second groups form one picture, and the third group forms another. The two pictures are revealed by the use of the semicolon and the colon; and intelligently to read the verse aloud requires a shorter pause at the semicolon than at the colon. The two pictures are clearly indicated by "feeding" in one group, and "eating" in the other.

21. Virtue and wisdom are an up-hill road, where people do not advance without some effort; folly and vice, a down-hill path, where it requires some effort not to advance.

22. The custom of exchanging presents on a certain day in the year is a fine thing or a foolish thing, as the case may be; an encouragement to friendliness, or a tribute to fashion; an expression of good nature, or a bid for favor; an outgoing of generosity,

or a guise of greed; a cheerful old custom, or a futile old farce, according to the spirit and the form which it takes.

This sentence, from a well-known writer, is poorly punctuated, and has another fault, which will be revealed by an effort to punctuate the group of words following "farce" so as to show to what it belongs.

The omission of a comma before the first "or" is proper; the use of one before each following "or" is unnecessary.

"A fine thing" and "a foolish thing" are general terms, and are followed by four illustrations in alternative groups,—for instance, "an encouragement to friendliness" is "a fine thing," and "a tribute to fashion" is "a foolish thing." This sense relation requires a colon after "be."

"According to the spirit and the form which it takes" belongs to each semicolon group following the colon; and, moreover, it is a mere duplication in sense of "as the case may be." It is difficult, by punctuation, unmistakably to separate this group from exclusive modification of the group it follows, and thus tie it to the four groups, where it seems to belong.

The substitution of "according to the spirit and the form it takes" for "as the case may be," would convey, it seems to us, the author's full meaning. With the omission of commas as suggested, this would give the following:

22–1. The custom of exchanging presents on a certain day in the year is a fine thing or a foolish thing, according to the spirit and the form which it takes: an encouragement to friendliness or a tribute to fashion; an expression of good nature or a bid for favor; an outgoing of generosity or a guise of greed; a cheerful old custom or a futile old farce.

23. The philosophical elements of his work are not especially profound or novel; its descriptive merits are considerable; but its deficiencies as an orderly and inclusive narrative are, to say the least, perplexing.

The sense relations between the three clauses of the above sentence are not properly expressed by its conjunctions, "and" (understood) and "but." The incongruity of the *and* relation becomes apparent upon reading the first and second clauses

with "and" between them. The use of two semicolons in the sentence renders the "but" relation indeterminate.

The sentence needs to be recast, which may be done as follows:

23–1. The philosophical elements of his work are not especially profound or novel; and, although its descriptive merits are considerable, its deficiencies as an orderly and inclusive narrative are, to say the least, perplexing.

24. Amateurs in literary composition soon acquire the bad habit of writing carelessly; they spell strange names in two or more different ways; they form capital letters, and even the small lower-case letters, so obscurely that one word may be mistaken for another; they have no clearly defined system, or at least observe none, for the proper placing of capitals, italic, and the marks of punctuation.

The above sentence is from the preface of what is probably the most complete work on composition written in recent years. A preceding sentence contains the statement that our high schools do not "thoroughly teach the correct expression of thought in writing."

In view of this charge against our high schools, and because the sentence under consideration is itself a type of careless construction, very common among even good writers, the sentence becomes interesting. It is divided by semicolons into four clauses, apparently in a series; but an analysis of the meaning of the language will show that the four clauses do not constitute a series.

Four charges against amateurs are made in the sentence, in brief, as follows:

1. Writing carelessly.
2. Spelling names differently.
3. Forming letters obscurely.
4. Possessing, or observing, no system in the use of capitals, italics, and marks of punctuation.

If these four faults form a series, what does "writing carelessly" mean? To spell a word in different ways, to form letters obscurely, or to observe no system in the use of capitals, etc., is "writing carelessly." In short, the first term of the four is a

general statement, of which the three terms that follow are details. This fact should be shown by the punctuation.

A colon after the first clause will show its relation to what follows.

CHAPTER V

SOME USES OF THE DASH

IT is often said that the dash is the mark of ignorance in punctuation. When a writer does not know how to punctuate his own language at any point he uses a dash. When one, in the preparation of another's manuscript for the printer, cannot exactly make out the meaning at any point, and therefore does not know what mark to use, he inserts a dash. When the printer, who does most of the world's punctuation, is in doubt, he uses a dash.

Out of this mass of hit-or-miss punctuation, many writers of text-books on punctuation have attempted to formulate rules for the use of the dash. The result is—"all that could be expected."

The dash is a useful mark. It came late into our language; and it came to meet a real need, which our illustrative sentences and discussions, we hope, will reveal.

One of the distinctive uses of the dash is to indicate a rhetorical pause made by a speaker for a specific and well-understood purpose. Mr. De Vinne says "the dash should be selected whenever there is an abrupt change in a statement." This is the primary use of the mark, and is the one generally understood by persons with even a slight knowledge of punctuation. Mr. De Vinne illustrates his definition by a sentence which possesses special interest

for the student of punctuation. This sentence appears also in the works of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bigelow, and in several other text-books on punctuation. As Mr. Wilson's work antedates all the others, it is probable that he first used the sentence.

As Mr. Bigelow and Mr. De Vinne made changes, even though slight, in the sentence, its study becomes both interesting and informing. We give the sentence as written by each of these writers:

28. HERE LIES THE GREAT—False marble! where? Nothing but sordid dust lies here.—Wilson.

28–1. Here lies the great— False marble! where? Nothing but sordid dust lies here.—Bigelow.

28–2. Here lies the great—false marble! where? Nothing but sordid dust lies here.—De Vinne.

Let us carefully compare these examples, and ask the meanings of the different modes of printing them.

In No. 28 the first four words are in small-capital letters, the first word of the sentence beginning, of course, with a capital. The word "false" begins with a capital.

In No. 28–1 there are no small-capital letters, and there is a space after the dash.

In 28-2 "false" begins with a small letter.

We are not particularly concerned with the second part of the example (nothing but sordid dust lies here).

What is the meaning of the small-capital letters in No. 28?

What is the meaning of the space following the dash in No. 28–1?

What is the meaning of the capital letter beginning "false" in Nos. 28 and 28–1, and of the small letter beginning the same word in No. 28–2?

What punctuation will best reveal the full meaning of this sentence, so differently treated by these well-known writers?

We venture to assert that few readers would grasp at the first reading the *real* relations in this sentence, and, further, that not a few cultured readers would make bad work of the sense in reading No. 28–2 at sight.

Mr. Wilson makes no explanation of his use of the small-capital letters; and their absence from Nos. 28–1 and 28–2 imply that Mr. Bigelow and Mr. De Vinne attached no importance to them. We think they serve a useful, if not an indispensable, purpose; and it requires little imagination to picture the scene which this typographical device suggests. Let us imagine it, and learn one important use of the dash.

On an anniversary day, a crowd stands before the monument of a great man. Let us assume it to be a monument of Shakespeare. The speaker is in the midst of his oration, his listeners "hanging" on his words. He turns to the statue, and, with pointing finger, directs the attention of his hearers to the inscription on the base of the monument, which inscription reads as follows:

HERE LIES THE GREAT SHAKESPEARE

The orator begins slowly to read the inscription. When he reaches the name of the great man, he

hesitates, turns his attention from the inscription to the monument as a whole, and, without uttering the name "Shakespeare," passionately addresses the monument thus:

"False marble! Where lies the great Shakespeare? Nothing but sordid dust lies here."

Having heard the speech, we come to prepare it for the printed page. How shall we punctuate the part of it now under consideration so as to convey the meaning expressed by the speaker in the break made after the word "great"? Mr. De Vinne's mode (No. 28–2) of printing the language fails to show the grammatical end of the first group of words (the inscription); and, in the absence of such knowledge, the reader will not readily catch the relation of "great" to "false marble." Mr. Wilson (No. 28) shows the change in two ways: by a change in the style of letters in the first word after the dash, and by beginning this word with a capital letter. The sense of the language clearly shows that the first group of words would have ended, in the absence of the dash, where the dash ends. The change from the style of letters (small capitals) also shows this. As the practice of using no period after a dash in sentences like No. 28 is thoroughly established, the reader learns from the first letter of the next word whether such word begins a new sentence. As printed in Mr. De Vinne's work, "false," beginning with a small letter, appears to be a part of what precedes, giving the meaning of "the great, false marble." As printed in Mr. Wilson's work, "False" begins a new sentence, and should have the usual space before it; but is it correct?

Mr. Bigelow, apparently seeing the difficulty we are discussing, puts a space after the dash, thus ending the sentence with the dash. This of course requires that "false" begin with a capital letter, the word being the first word in a new sentence.

We believe that if "false" is written with a capital letter, thus making a new sentence, the dash should be followed by the space that is used to separate sentences.

Our conclusions would require that the sentence be written in the following way:

28–3. "Here lies the great"— False marble! where?

Let it be remembered that we are attempting in the above sentence to reproduce on the printed page *what* a speaker said and *how* he said it.

If the first four words are a part of the inscription, the fact must be shown; and it is shown in No. 28–3 by the quotation-marks. The use of small capitals in No. 28 is much more suggestive of an inscription than the use of the quotation-marks in No. 28–3.

In our next illustrative sentence, the grammatical connection within the sentence is perfect, but the sense changes. Here the dash is used to suspend the thought in preparation for the surprise to come. It is a rhetorical mark, for it indicates how the words would be spoken:

29. He never lacked a good word—from those who spoke his praise.

A speaker or a writer often wishes to repeat a part of or all that he has said, and then continue with

his line of thought, using different words for emphasis, for exactness, or for other reasons. Or he may wish in this way to summarize what he has already said, completing the sentence with the summarizing word as the subject. There seems to be no grammatical relation between the summarizing group of words and what precedes them. The dash serves to show the break in the sentence, and is thus merely a rhetorical mark:

30. He has been unkindly—he has been shamefully treated.

31. Persecution, injustice, ruined fortune—all seemed insignificant.

The office of the dash in each of the above sentences might be performed by a blank space of equal length; but such space might not always be easily distinguished from the usual spaces between words.

Some English writers use dots or two or more periods where we use dashes in sentences like the above.

Our next illustrative sentence, with its modifications, shows a very useful and quite indispensable office of the dash. The sentence exemplifies one of the commonest errors made by good writers.

32. The expenditure of this vast sum is entrusted to school officers, trustees, inspectors, and commissioners.

32–1. The expenditure of this vast sum is entrusted to school officers: trustees, inspectors, and commissioners.

32–2. The expenditure of this vast sum is entrusted to school officers (trustees, inspectors, and commissioners).

32–3. The expenditure of this vast sum is entrusted to school officers,—trustees, inspectors, and commissioners.

The punctuation of No. 32 is erroneous, for it does not show the relation between "school officers" and what follows.

That of No. 32–1 is not bad; but the words following "school officers" are not formally introduced, and therefore do not require a colon.

That of No. 32–2 is not wholly bad; but the words introduced are not a pure parenthesis, and to use the marks of parenthesis in this way would unduly extend their office.

That of No. 32–3 is the best, because the true relation (apposition) of the words is maintained, and is shown by a mark (the comma) already seen to be the proper mark for this relation. The failure of the comma to show the relation of apposition in No. 32 is due to the fact that the words following "officers" form an *apparent* series with "officers." The comma here needs re-enforcing by a special grouping mark, which office the dash performs. The comma shows the relation; the dash does the grouping.

We spoke above of extending the office and limiting the value of a mark. We mean by this that the more uses and, in consequence, the more meanings a mark has, the more difficult it is for the reader to interpret it when he meets it. For this reason the comma and dash seem to be the best mode of punctuating sentences like the above.

As we saw in Sentence 6, the colon is used to mark the largest divisions of a sentence; and it is used, as

in Sentence 25, for the formal introduction of particulars. The former use is determined by the colon's rank, which is above the semicolon and below the period; the latter use is conventional, and is without reference to its rank.

If two colons appear in a sentence, one because of its rank and one in the enumeration of particulars, there may be a seeming inconsistency in grouping. The same is true when a colon is used within a group made by a semicolon. For instance, in No. 25–3 we used a colon in each of two groups, the groups themselves being separated by a semicolon. We think it much better to use within each group the comma and dash than to use the colon, thus emphasizing the grouping done by the semicolon, instead of apparently subordinating the colon in each group to the semicolon making the two groups. This would give the following punctuation for No. 25–3:

33. In a bill of exchange there are three original parties,—drawer, drawee, and payee; in a promissory note, only two,—maker and payee.

We have thus used a comma and a dash to set off particulars formally introduced, making the punctuation of No. 33 inconsistent with that of No. 25, and apparently inconsistent with No. 32–2. If this resulted in misleading a reader, objection might be raised; but, we feel confident, this exceptional mode of punctuation is justified.

In our next illustrative sentence we get away from details either formally or almost formally introduced; yet the relation to be shown by the punctuation is just the same and quite as evident:

34. She had a face altogether of the sunny south,—a pure skin, black hair, and blue eyes.

Professor Wendell uses this punctuation a great deal and, we think, very effectively. Other good writers do not use it at all; but they seem to have no satisfactory substitute for it. Professor Wendell frequently uses it twice in one sentence, as it is used in No. 33. The following sentence is from his "Literary History of America" (page 2):

35. These records [of things seen and felt by men] are often set forth in terms which may be used only by those of rarely special gift and training,—the terms of architecture and sculpture, of painting and music; but oftener and more freely they are phrased in the terms which all men learn somehow to use,—the terms of language.

We may perhaps turn aside from our discussion of the dash to consider a point in the above sentence which illustrates our general principle of grouping, especially as exhibited in Sentences 10 to 10–3.

Many punctuators would set off by commas the group "oftener and more freely" in No. 35 on the ground that it is "an intermediate parenthetical group." This would be thoughtless punctuation based upon a rule of questionable meaning. The *but* relation in this sentence is between two groups of words restricted, respectively, in meaning by "often" and "oftener"; and commas should not be permitted to destroy a grouping that shows the contrast. Somewhat shortened, the sentence would read thus, readily exhibiting the point under consideration:

35–1. These records are *often* set forth in terms of architecture; but *oftener* they are phrased in terms of language.

The italicized words here emphasize the restriction of the thoughts that are in the *but* relation in this sentence. In No. 10–2 commas perform this office by holding the proper words in the *but* relation. We may not assert that commas in the second clause of No. 35 would change the meaning to the extent that it is changed by the absence of commas in No. 10–1; but the point of emphasis would be somewhat changed by their use in No. 35.

The combination of a comma and a dash to express apposition is most useful when the thing to be explained by the appositive words is suggested, as in No. 34, and not indicated, as in No. 33. We find a good illustration of this point in Gray's Elegy as punctuated by the author; and we also find in this illustration what, we believe, is a late development of the dash. The poet Gray was one of the most painstaking writers known in literature. There was a comma in the first line of the manuscript of his Elegy in a Country Churchyard when sent to the printer:

35A. The curfew tolls, the knell of parting day.

The comma here means just what the comma in No. 34 means. What follows "tolls" is in apposition with the thing which "the curfew tolls" suggests, as what follows the comma and dash in No. 34 is in apposition with a picture suggested by what precedes. The suggestion in No. 35A is less apparent and more subtle than in No. 34.

The printer who received the manuscript of the Elegy did not see the picture, and so left out the comma, thus making the intransitive verb "tolls" a

transitive verb. The poet's musical ear felt the improvement made thus unconsciously by the printer; and the change was accepted.

In order more clearly to show the meaning of the manuscript line, we should punctuate it with the comma and dash:

35A–1. The curfew tolls,—the knell of parting day.

Thus the dash is an aid to the comma in grouping the appositive words, especially when following a thought only implied.

There is a very common use of the dash that is commended by all writers on punctuation; but not one of these writers has formulated a rule that differentiates the dash so used from marks of parenthesis.

A writer frequently uses a group of words that are *purely* parenthetical in nature; and yet he desires to give them grammatical connection with the sentence. Such connection clearly takes them out of the class of groups of words requiring marks of parenthesis; but, because of their purely parenthetical nature, it does not put them into the class requiring commas or semicolons alone. As the group retains a twofold nature, such nature may well be shown by two marks. If it be said this is not good reasoning, we may well resort to a rule which, with the explanation of the conditions above given, together with a very general practice, will quite distinctly differentiate the class of sentences to be thus punctuated. Such a rule will have, at least, the merit of producing a certain degree of uniformity in punctuation. The rule may be about as follows:

RULE.—Matter that is purely parenthetical in nature, and

yet is given grammatical connection, slight or otherwise, with what precedes it, may be set off by a dash or dashes together with the mark that would be required by the language with the parenthetical matter omitted.

One or two sentences will illustrate the points under discussion:

36. He cannot understand—nor can any of his leisurely countrymen—why tomorrow will not answer as well as today.

The matter here set off by dashes is a side-remark, purely parenthetical in nature, but given grammatical connection by the use of the conjunction "nor." If the matter were not purely parenthetical, it would, of course, not take the dashes. A sentence similar in form will illustrate this point:

36–1. He cannot understand, nor does he want to understand, why tomorrow will not answer as well as today.

In the next sentence the grammatical relation is in the nature of apposition; and yet what follows "heroines" is not purely an appositive, for all "female characters" are not "heroines." The added thought goes beyond the office of parenthetical matter, and becomes an integral part of the sentence, which cannot be omitted without changing the sense:

37. George Eliot's heroines—her female characters, from first to last—are drawn with the serene firmness of omniscience.

The group of words here set off by dashes expresses too much to be either an appositive of "heroines" or a parenthesis explaining the meaning of "heroines"; in short, it is neither wholly one nor the other, and cannot be properly punctuated as belonging to one or the other class of words.

It may be well to note here the difference between Sentences 36 and 37 and Sentence 32–3, the latter being a type of sentences often improperly punctuated when the sentence is continued beyond the appositive group of words. We have just read such a sentence in the morning newspaper:

38. There is literature in our newspapers—a lively, colloquial, vivid literature, reflective of the life we lead—and we are grateful for his [Augustine Birrell's] admonition that in the making of it we have regard first for truth and afterward for beauty, if we find it.

The error in the punctuation of the above sentence was probably due to the lack of a clear definition, in the mind of the writer, of the meanings of the dash. The relation of the matter between the dashes to what precedes is clearly that of apposition; and the dash alone is quite generally used to express it. We prefer, however, the comma and dash, as was shown in our discussion of No. 32.

This relation makes the appositive group of words a part of what has gone before, thus ending the first clause with the end of the appositive group of words. This puts the *and* relation between the two *larger* groups of the sentence, thus making the use of the second dash erroneous, and requiring a new grouping. A semicolon will best perform this office.

Punctuated in accordance with the above reasoning, and with some commas added, the sentence will read as follows:

38–1. There is literature in our newspapers,—a lively, colloquial, vivid literature, reflective of the life we lead; and we are grateful for his [Augustine Birrell's] admoni-

tion that, in the making of it, we have regard first for truth, and afterward for beauty, if we find it.

THE DASH AS A PARAGRAPH-MARK

In order to save space, the dash is used, purely conventionally, between paragraphs not put in paragraph form,—that is, between paragraphs run together, as are sentences. Such usage may be seen in the definitions of any dictionary. It is permissible especially on postal and correspondence cards, or wherever economy of space is important.

EXAMPLES

1. Men, of your own family and out of it, sometimes put you on trains, and take care of you—sometimes.

2. To have courage without pugnacity, conviction without bigotry, charity without condescension, faith without credulity, love of humanity without mere sentimentality, meekness with power, and emotion with sanity—that is Christianity.

3. The weather was perfect,—the days warm, the nights cool.

4. Royalty bred in Saul what it bred in most kings of the East,—an imperious temper, a despotic will.

5. Nurses who cherish the professional spirit will be minor players in the drama,—faithful attendants in the day, silent watchers in the night.

6. Stevenson never lacks precision, clearness, proportion,—the classic qualities; but, outside of them, the variety of his masters helped him to be various.

7. This spider springs for his mark, and is remark-

ably sure of his aim,—a fact which proves that for distances of several inches the vision of hunting spiders is perfectly distinct and clear.

8. Serenity of soul is a divine gift,—prop, shield, and unfailing cordial in one.

9. Now, if it were possible that you, Sir,—and the keen eyes surveyed the young man closely,—could command the confidence of these dealers, you might make your visit profitable.

10. Mr. Newman's syntax presents Homer's thought in a way which is something more than unconstrained,—over-familiar; something more than easy,—free and easy.

11. Jackson's conquests had been those of war,—always more dazzling than those of peace; his temperament was of fire,—always more attractive than one of marble.

12. The subject divides itself naturally into two main topics,—the political and the social and economic.

13. The work of his administration is represented by the City Hospital,—its buildings and equipment and its domestic administration.

14. Walt Whitman is the globe itself,—all seas, lands, forests, climates, storms, snows, sunshines, rains, of universal earth.

15. A few northern warblers were chirping in the evergreens along the edge of the summit, between the inn and the Point,—black-polls and bay-breasts, with black-throated greens and Carolina wrens; and near there I saw with pleasure my first Tennessee phoebes.

16. The patient has the symptoms resulting from dilatation,—dyspnea and serous effusion.

Without knowing the meaning of the three technical terms in the above sentence, the reader is informed by the comma and dash that "the symptoms" are "dyspnea and serous effusion."

17. Her economies were frantic child's play,—methodless, inexperienced, fitful; and they were apt to be followed by remorse.

In this sentence "child's play" is not sufficiently specific to define "economies"; and therefore the characteristics of "child's play" are added in the form of a group of adjectives looking back to "economies" and descriptive of child's play.

18. A young man or a young woman may go, unaided and unfriended, to a large city,—may go with nothing and to nothing,—and yet build up a beautiful and successful life.

In this example the comma is required because it would be required after "city" if the *dash* group (may go with nothing and to nothing) were omitted. The dashes set off the group, and thus connect what follows the second dash with what precedes the first one.

19. We made a brave effort to smoke the rats out with the vilest imaginable compound of vapors,—brimstone, burnt leather, and arsenic,—and spent a cold night in a deck-bivouac to give the experiment fair play.

This sentence is from an English classic, Dr. Kane's "Arctic Explorations." The first comma and dash perform a double office: they indicate and set off the appositive group that follows, and also act as the dash and comma in the preceding example.

20. The same note of character—the craftsman's keen delight in work—is struck in "Adam Bede" and in the little poem on Stradivarius.

Here is a fairly well-established conventional punctuation which we do not like. The relation of the group of words following the first dash to what precedes it, is that of apposition, and is best shown by the comma, with the dash for grouping. This use would require the repetition of the comma and dash after the group. The comma and dash would conform to the punctuation of the examples considered above.

21. We went into the trenches a full regiment. We came out to retreat again with four hundred men —and I left my younger brother there.

22. In spite of his harsh, stern exterior, the man had wonderful depths of emotion and nervous sensibility. I think you can see it in his face—when you have discovered it otherwise.

Much of the beauty of language is lost to one who cannot read into the dash in No. 21 a scene of tender emotion, and into the dash in No. 22 a bit of philosophy, as well as a bit of humor.

CHAPTER VI

PUNCTUATION BY REASON AND CONVENTION

We shall discuss in this chapter some uses of marks determined partly by reason and partly by convention. In a subsequent chapter we shall take up the purely conventional uses of marks.

Among the commonest uses of marks is that of a comma before the conjunction *that* introducing a group of words. Our next two examples illustrate two classes of sentences in which "that" connects the parts of each sentence somewhat differently, permitting a difference in punctuation. As such modes of punctuation are not well settled by practice, and cannot be determined by reason, the use or omission of the comma in the second sentence (No. 40) becomes a matter of taste. We prefer the comma:

39. The court holds that the evidence is material.

40. The truth is, that we very much exaggerate the power of riches.

If it be said that punctuation which is a matter of taste necessarily becomes inconsistent punctuation, we may reply that some inconsistency in such punctuation does not in the least affect the value of the proper use of marks where they have real worth. A discussion of these seemingly minor points bears this value, that it may show niceties in grouping overlooked in our discussion of sharply defined groups.

No comma is required after "holds" in No. 39 because there is no grouping of words in the sentence that requires to be made in order to show a relation different from the relation that exists in the simplest form of expression, such, for instance, as the relation of adjective to noun, noun to verb, verb to object, etc.

In Sentence 40 "that" does not grow out of or coalesce with "is" as "that" grows out of and coalesces with "holds" in No. 39. The reader almost invariably pauses after "is" in such relations, as if to group into a whole what follows, such whole constituting the predicate of the sentence. The comma serves to show a grouping that is at once natural and helpful in reading, whether aloud or silently. This relation, with the need of the grouping, may be shown somewhat more clearly in a sentence where the use of the comma is quite unquestioned by good writers:

41. The benefit of a right good book depends upon this, that its virtues just soak into the mind, and there become a living, generative force.

Let us note that the relation here marked by a comma is quite suggestive of two similar relations which we indicated, respectively, by a colon (Sentence 26–3) and by a comma and dash (Sentence 34). It is plain that the relation in each of the three sentences (Nos. 26–3, 34, 41) is that of apposition; but it takes a different form in each, and so we punctuate the three sentences differently, each sentence falling into a different class.

While the above sentences present no difficulty

in their punctuation, the punctuation of other sentences quite like them seems to be somewhat puzzling, yet it is based upon reason.

In court decisions the finding or findings generally appear in a separate paragraph or paragraphs, following a review of the case. The punctuation here is not entirely uniform; but, although it seems inconsistent with that of No. 39, it is easily explained:

42. Held, that the evidence is material.

If the decision covers two or more points, it may take this form:

42–1. Held—

1. That the evidence is material.

2. That the lower court did not err in its instructions to the jury.

If there is a reason for the use of a comma after "held" in No. 42, the same reason seems to require a comma after "held" in No. 42–1, the dash being used for another purpose, to be considered later. A comma is not used in No. 42–1, because its omission is the *conventional* usage.

The punctuation of No. 42 probably follows the mode of reading the sentence, a decided pause being made after "held," which would not be the case in reading No. 39.

It could not be said that a colon after "this" in No. 41 would not be good punctuation.

As we have said elsewhere, Mr. Wilson's work is very masterful and exhaustive, even though exceedingly puzzling; and therefore we feel justified in drawing frequent lessons from it. We take from it our next

two illustrative sentences, which are so much alike that we wonder how there can be a difference in their punctuation after the verb followed by "that":

43. The writer just quoted says, that "the grammatical pauses, which are addressed to the eye of the reader, are insufficient for the speaker, who addresses himself to the understanding 'through the porches of the ear.'"

44. Mr. Maglathlin says that "the comma occurs sometimes where there should be no pause in reading or speaking; nor can the length of any required stop be inferred with much certainty from the common stop-mark used."

We fail to find a rule in Mr. Wilson's work explaining the use of the comma before "that" in No. 43. The sentences, however, are taken, not from Mr. Wilson's illustrative examples, but from the text of his work; and therefore the punctuation is more likely a typographical error.

FIRST, SECOND, WHEN, NOW, BECAUSE, ETC.

Writers on punctuation seem to find the use of marks required by such words as *first*, *second*, *when*, *now*, *because*, etc., very puzzling; and their rules to determine the punctuation are exceedingly puzzling to the reader.

This punctuation falls quite readily under the principles of grouping and relationship exemplified in practically all of our illustrative sentences considered up to this point. It will be seen that the difficulty is to determine the actual relation of the word to what precedes or follows, or to both. Illustrative examples will serve to solve this difficulty:

45. You ask me, perhaps, even you, who are all charity, why parts of this book are what they are.

46. You ask me, perhaps even you, who are all charity, why parts of this book are what they are.

In No. 45 the speaker makes in the first three words a statement which may be merely an assumption; and, perceiving this fact as the statement is finished, he wishes to soften the possible severity of his language. This he does by the insertion of a *slightly* parenthetical word (perhaps). Besides having this parenthetical character, "perhaps" has here also a squinting character (looking both ways),—that is, it may be intended to qualify what precedes it or what follows it. As it is entirely cut off by a comma from what follows it, the reader must determine what it does qualify; and this he readily determines from his knowledge of language. Of course, it here qualifies the statement that precedes it. If "perhaps" were placed before "ask," the meaning would be unmistakable; but, as the effect of the language would not be exactly the same, the former mode of expression is necessary, and demands proper punctuation.

In No. 46 "perhaps" stands in the regular position of a word that qualifies what immediately follows it, and therefore needs no mark. The commas in this sentence are used to *suspend* a group of words, as diagrammatically illustrated in Sentence 4–3, coming between words closely connected in sense. The more natural position of this appositive group of words is immediately after the first "you"; but even here it would require the commas, because it is an appositive. They are placed where they are for the

same reason that "perhaps" is placed out of its natural order in No. 45.

47. The word *therefore* sometimes stands, as an adverb, in the natural position of an adverb, and therefore requires no mark, at least after it; it likewise stands, as a conjunction, in the natural position of a conjunction, and therefore no mark is required after it; it also sometimes stands, as either part of speech, out of the regular order of such part of speech, breaking the continuous flow of the thought, and thus becoming *slightly* parenthetical and requiring the marks (commas) used to show this office of the word. If, therefore, this distinction between the word's uses be carefully noted, the punctuation required will not be difficult to learn.

The above sentence will serve to illustrate the punctuation required by "therefore" and also by its synonyms, which are *accordingly*, *because*, *hence*, *since*, *thence*, *wherefore*, etc. These words belong to a large group of words whose punctuation is readily determined by the sense relations. The word *however*, in its relation to other parts of the sentence, will serve to emphasize the distinction between the two uses of many of these words:

48. He was reluctant to discuss the subject. He replied, however, to all questions put to him, however pointed such questions were.

This sentence may be so formed as to bring the first "however" into the usual position of the conjunction:

48–1. He was reluctant to discuss the subject; however, he replied to all questions put to him, however pointed such questions were.

In this form, another word, *but*, *yet*, *although*, or the like, would be preferred to the first "however."

The relation indicated by the word *because* is easily misunderstood, and therefore often wrongly indicated in the punctuation by the presence or absence of a mark. The meaning of a sentence may thus be entirely changed by the punctuation:

49. John did not go to town because his father was absent.

49–1. John did not go to town, because his father was absent.

No. 49 asserts that John went to town, and states that his reason for going was not his father's absence. No. 49–1 asserts that John did *not* go to town, and that the reason for not going was his father's absence. In No. 49 the language is used in its natural order and without any turn in the thought, which is not complete until the end of the sentence is reached. In No. 49–1 the same language is made to give an entirely different meaning by changing the relation between the two groups of words constituting the sentence. A like change of real meaning is seen in Sentences 13 and 13–1; and a like change of apparent meaning is seen in Sentences 1 and 1–1. This principle is clearly exemplified in Sentences 11–1 and 11–2.

A very important principle of language is involved in this punctuation; and we should thoroughly comprehend it. In No. 49 the relation expressed by "not" goes on to the group of words beginning with "because," although apparently confined to "go." In No. 49–1 the relation is confined entirely to "go." We find a counterpart of this form of expression in the use of "only" and similar modifiers. "Only" is

used out of place so generally, often by excellent writers, that we hesitate to criticize such usage. In the expression, *I only assisted the boys to work the example*, we are not sure whether the writer means to say that he *only* assisted,—that is, did not do all the work; or that he assisted *only* the boys,—that is, not the girls; or that he assisted them *only* to work the example, and not to explain it.

A careful writer will always avoid such ambiguous expressions, for it is not easy for the reader to differentiate the meanings in such sentences as Nos. 49 and 49–1.

Our next two sentences (Nos. 50 and 51) are especially interesting because of their sources. No. 50 is a part of Mr. Teall's general rule (page 1) for the use of the comma; and No. 51 is a sentence from the text of Mr. Wilson's work (page 3), quoted by Mr. Teall in the discussion of his own rule.

We quote No. 50, not to consider it as a rule, but to consider the use of the comma in its language. No. 51, as it appears in Mr. Wilson's work, has a comma before "unless"; and Mr. Teall quotes the sentence to illustrate an erroneous use of the comma:

50. When there is no break in sense no comma should be used, unless necessary for clearness of expression.

51. Scarcely can a sentence be perused with satisfaction or interest, unless pointed with some degree of accuracy.

No. 50, like No. 49–1, is practically completed at the comma, what follows in each being added as

an additional thought. In No. 51 the language up to the comma is almost meaningless, or, at least, makes an untrue statement. What follows the comma *restricts* the assertion to a definite and true statement, just as what follows the comma in No. 49 *restricts* the meaning of the assertion made in the language preceding it. Because of this relation between the parts no comma is used, and for the reasons already discussed.

Sentences 50 and 51 are not unlike Sentences 13 and 13–1; and therefore the same reasoning determines their punctuation.

Mr. Wilson's use of a comma before "unless" in No. 51 is wrong, and is contrary to one of his own rules.

Such mistakes can be found, probably, in the textbook of every writer on punctuation. They are generally mere oversights, and should not be construed as evidence of the writer's lack of knowledge. It is the system of a writer which determines the value or lack of value of his work.

The punctuation between clauses connected by *when*, *where*, and like connectives, presents difficulties only when an attempt is made to rob such connectives of their apparent meanings, respectively, of time and place, as is done by some writers, and perhaps correctly in rare cases.

In each of our next three illustrative sentences the thought of time is equally manifest; and therefore there is no more need of a comma in one than in the other:

52. You may fire *when* you are ready, Gridley.

52–1. You may fire *now*, Gridley.

52–2. You may go *tomorrow*, Gridley.

It is true that "when" may lose, at least in a measure, its sense of time, and then indicate a somewhat different relation between the clauses it connects. Mr. Wilson gives the following sentence to illustrate this point:

53. Refrain not to speak, when by speaking you may be useful to others.

Here "when" may not refer to time, but may be equivalent to *if*, thus introducing a condition under which to speak; or it may be equivalent to *because*, thus giving a reason. Such meaning would make a sentence very much like No. 49–1.

We find an exact counterpart of No. 53, with similar punctuation, in the following sentence from the New Testament, Common Version:

53–1. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you.

The same sentence in the Revised Version appears without the comma, thus giving "when" its full sense of time:

53–2. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you.

In Sentence 47 we saw the various uses of the word "therefore"; and in Sentences 48 and 48–1 we saw the different meanings of "however" with a change of position. In our next five or six sentences, we shall see that the meaning to be conveyed determines the relation, this relation being indicated by the mark of punctuation:

54. Fortunately for me, the work was easy.

54–1. Fortunately, for me the work was easy.

In No. 54 the good fortune (fortunately) is for me, as if the language read, "It was fortunate for me." In 54–1 the comma cuts "fortunately" off from "for me"; and the meaning is thus changed.

If the meaning of No. 54–1 is not perfectly clear to the reader, it may be made so by a change in the form of the sentence:

54–2. Fortunately, the work was easy for me.

Sentence 54 is not capable of such transposition; and this shows that the sentences are different in meaning.

Words and groups of words like this and in like use are very numerous; yet practically all of them readily fall into their respective classes, and are easily punctuated. A change in meaning, however, even without a change in form, will require different punctuation, although the proper punctuation is rarely seen. That it is so seems strange in view of the fact that the meaning logically permits of no other than the obviously correct punctuation:

55. In conclusion, I wish to say that the evidence does not justify the verdict.

The relation of "in conclusion" will be clearly seen if we transfer the term:

55–1. I wish to say, in conclusion, that the evidence does not justify the verdict.

In each of these sentences "in conclusion" is merely an adverb equivalent to *finally*. If we make it equivalent to a clause, and thus prevent its performing the office of an adverb, its relation is changed, and its new relation will determine the punctuation.

Such a change and such new relation are seen in the next sentence:

55–2. In conclusion: the jury seemed unable to comprehend either the evidence or the charge of the judge; the judge was not entirely free from prejudice; and the prisoner was unable to obtain important evidence.

Here "in conclusion" seems to bear no grammatical relation to what follows. It is, however, the remnant of a clause which bears the *colon* relation to what follows; and therefore the colon is used after it. Such a clause might read thus, "I will state, in conclusion, the facts in the case."

YES, NO, AGAIN, ETC.

The words *yes*, *no*, *again*, *to sum up*, *to proceed*, etc., are often used in this way, and so require the colon:

56. Do you think he will meet the expectations of his friends? Yes: he has never failed to meet reasonable expectations.

Apparently in the absence of a comprehension of the *colon* relation between "yes" or "no" and what follows, even careful punctuators seem to prefer the semicolon after these words; and, it may be said, convention thus overrides reason, making the semicolon far more common than the colon for this punctuation.

The conventional punctuation of the sentence is as follows:

56–1. Do you think he will meet the expectations of his friends? Yes; he has never failed to meet reasonable expectations.

As marks are used mainly to assist the reader in so grouping words that their relations may be readily seen, it is apparent that a mark is not needed when the grouping is unmistakable in its absence. There is a large class of groups so formed and so connected that a mark of punctuation between them is superfluous, although used quite in accordance with our general principle, as exemplified in Sentences 1 and 1–1. The following sentence exhibits such grouping:

57. The author was identified with Maine in blood and spirit and in the ideals of life.

In this sentence the first "and" clearly connects "blood" and "spirit," forming a group governed by the preposition "in." Because of the absence of a mark before the second "and," the reader, in view of what has been said in our discussion, might expect the word following the second "and" to have the same sense relation to "spirit" that "spirit" bears to "blood." If such relation does not exist, then why should not a comma be used to notify the reader of the fact, as one was used in Sentence 1–1? The reason is, that marks are used to prevent wrong groupings which are easily made because of apparent, but wrong, relations. When the eye does not need a mark, the mark should be omitted, even though consistency in punctuation seems to call for it.

It is to be noted that "in blood and spirit" makes in itself a complete group and a complete picture (the material and the immaterial), thus practically inhibiting the use of a third coördinate word connected by "and"; moreover, the word "in" following the

second "and" at once notifies the reader that another *in* group is to follow the conjunction. For these reasons there is no liability even to momentary wrong grouping, and therefore no mark is needed before the second "and." This principle may be applied to somewhat long groups, if similarly formed, even though the words beginning the groups are not the same. This applies especially to groups formed by the correlative conjunctions, such as *either—or, neither—nor*, etc., the first conjunction giving notice that its correlative is to introduce a group bound to the preceding group by the expected complementary conjunction.

If we closely followed the principle exemplified in Sentence 1–1, a comma would be required before the second "and" in No. 57. Such use of marks would be very "close" punctuation, which means subservience to rules based upon an apparent principle. Close punctuation often becomes confusing by making so many groups of the words in a sentence that such groups are not readily grasped and properly joined together by the reader. The same effect is produced by the use of too many short sentences in a paragraph, for the relations existing between such sentences is not easily apprehended. Striving after short sentences is a common fault of many modern writers.

EXAMPLES

1. I shall go unless my orders forbid.

2. We fail to praise the ceaseless ministry of the inanimate world around us only because its kindness is unobtrusive.

3. We never praise the ceaseless ministry of the great inanimate world around us, except when we are compelled to invoke its kindness.

4. They are alike in one respect, that each is susceptible of omission.

5. His emotions are divided between contemptuous hatred of those who are beneath him because they are black, and envious hatred of those who are above him because they are what he calls "aristocrats"; and we are not alarmed if he rallies the "crackers" of a state, or even of a group of states in which the same conditions exist, to his support.

6. No one knew where the boundary line was, because, as we pointed out long ago, there never was a boundary line.

7. Holmes illustrated, perhaps better than any of that remarkable circle of poets of whom he was the surviving member, the brightness and beauty of life in itself.

8. There is no sorrow I have thought more about than this: that one who aspires to live a higher life than the common should fall from that serene height into the soul-wasting struggle with worldly annoyances.

The use of the colon in No. 8 follows conventional punctuation; and, therefore, as many good writers prefer this mode of punctuation, it is well to know the usage.

9. This, however excellent in its way, is neither scientific nor rational.

10. This, however, excellent though it be, is neither scientific nor rational.

11. He lacks all the essentials of a big man . . . No, he is not the man for the place.

12. It is possible, yes, probable, that the work can be done in the time set for it.

In examples 11 and 12, "no" and "yes" are not used as sentence words requiring the punctuation of Sentence 56; but they are mere expletives, introducing something more emphatic than what precedes. Each takes the punctuation of an expletive, namely, a comma or commas.

13. The man gave many proofs of complete indifference to death, while he was doing his duty.

14. On the battle-field the man gave many proofs of complete indifference to death, while at home he seemed almost a coward.

No. 13 is an *Atlantic Monthly* sentence. As "while" is here equivalent to *during the time*, the use of the comma, which gives "while" the adversative meaning exhibited by "while" in No. 14, is wrong. In No. 14 "while" is almost equivalent to "but," and here loses the sense of time.

15. The Lord has blessed thee, since my coming.

No. 15 is a clause from Gen. xxx, 30, punctuated as it appears in Webster's New International. As "since" is a preposition, equivalent in meaning to *during the time subsequent to*, the use of the comma before it is clearly a typographical error.

CHAPTER VII

COMMA, SEMICOLON, COLON, AND PERIOD THEIR DIFFERENTIATION

As has already been seen, we determine what mark of punctuation is helpful at any point in written or printed language by the sense relation between two groups of words and by the degree of separation between such groups. The degrees of separation cannot be so accurately classified that there will not be much apparent and some real inconsistency in the punctuation of the most careful writer, and much more in the uses of marks by different writers.

We shall consider these points in this chapter, in order to show (1) the cause of this inconsistency; (2) how, in some measure, it may be avoided; and (3) that much of it is wholly immaterial, being not in the least misleading.

A diagrammatic grouping indicated by the co-ordinate conjunction *and*, with or without one of the four principal marks, may help to illustrate the above points and to differentiate, to some extent, the uses of the marks:

1. . . . and . . .
2. . . . , and . . .
3. . . . ; and . . .
4. . . . : and . . .
5. . . . . And . . .

What does the absence of a mark before "and" in Diagram 1, and what does each of the marks in the other diagrams, say to the reader, even before he has seen enough of what follows the conjunction to enable him to apprehend the probable grouping?

We, of course, know that "and" connects words and groups of words which are coördinate in sense, and that such groups are often similar in form. Similarity in form with similarity of relationship in groups of words makes reading easy; and much attention is given to it by good writers.

In Diagram 1 "and" stands between two words or groups of words whose apparent relation is quite unmistakable for their real relation, which was not the case in Sentence 1, which therefore required a mark of punctuation. In other words, no mistake can be made, and therefore no mark is needed. However this diagram may be filled out, "and" joins words or groups of words into a single group, such new group being related to some other word or group in the sentence.

Diagram 2 gives notice of a grouping different from that in Diagram 1; and Diagrams 3, 4, and 5 exhibit still other groupings.

We saw, particularly in Sentences 7, 7–1, and 7–2, a simple grouping which plainly required another and a larger mark than the comma. We saw another kind of grouping in other sentences which also unmistakably required a mark other than the semicolon.

We now come to discuss the basis of differentiating our principal marks, sometimes at points where the

choice of a mark is not always unmistakable. In some cases the choice is based upon well-defined sense relations; in other cases it is based upon shades of meaning or upon degrees of separation not sufficiently sharp to make the choice easy, especially under *rules* for punctuation.

Sentence 1–1 is a good illustration of Diagram 2; and yet the apparent relation between "children" and their "mothers" might so strongly impress itself upon the mind of an inexperienced reader, especially if reading the sentence at sight and aloud, that the comma would not prevent a momentary wrong combination of these words. A semicolon before the conjunction would prevent the liability to such error, and probably do so even with the most inexperienced reader. Thus we have a choice between the comma and the semicolon in Sentence 1; and this choice rests upon the degree of liability to error, which cannot be the same with different classes of readers. Liability to error in grouping is increased by a closeness of *apparent* relations that are *wrong* relations, and also by a reader's lack of expertness in grouping language at sight. In view of these facts, we think the use of a semicolon in Sentence 1 better punctuation than the use of a comma; but the use of the semicolon in this particular sentence should not be made to justify a rule requiring a semicolon between every two clauses connected by a conjunction, or between two clauses so connected, one of which contains one or more commas.

Our next sentence is taken from an essay, in a high-class magazine, by the professor of English in

a leading eastern university; and this essay has for its title "Writing English":

58. The boy must be able to say what he knows, or write what he knows, or he does not know it.

As written and punctuated, this sentence contains three apparently coördinate groups of words, the groups being connected by "or," and the grouping indicated by commas. It is, however, composed of only two main groups, the first of the two groups being regrouped into other groups. Such grouping should always be shown by the punctuation; for, when it is not so shown, the sentence cannot be read without some distractive effect upon the reader and, if read aloud, also upon the hearer.

The failure of this sentence to read smoothly, or without distractive effect, arises from the usual cause: the form of the language leads the reader to look forward to a mode of development of the sentence which does not follow,—that is, the *apparent* mode of development, as exhibited in the grouping, is not the *real* mode of development. As each of the second and third groups is introduced by "or" and preceded by a comma, the reader is led to look for the same relation between the second and third groups that exists between the first and second. He is thus led to expect a group in a series, which does not follow.

The distractive effect of the sentence can be removed in some degree by writing it in the following form, the added "to" giving the second group a form similar to that of the first:

58–1. The boy must be able to say or *to* write what he knows, or he does not know it.

In this condensed form the sentence lacks, at the point of condensation, the emphasis of the original; and therefore the sentence is not so effective in its statement of a truth. If, then, the original form is preferred, its distractive effect can be removed by the use of punctuation that properly groups its parts:

58–2. The boy must be able to say what he knows, or write what he knows; or he does not know it.

The semicolon here *disconnects* the second group from the third, giving the third group connection with a larger group, the first and second combined.

The need of the semicolon in No. 58–2 is not determined by the presence of the preceding comma, but mainly by the apparent relations of the groups, such apparent relations being emphasized by the presence of the second "or," which makes the three groups appear to be in a series. If these groups were in a series, the second "or" would connect the second and third groups. The semicolon at once throws the grouping into two parts, thus making the second "or" connect all that precedes with all that follows.

Although the writer of Sentence 58 appears to have placed no value upon the *like* formation of the first two groups of this sentence, nor to have recognized the differentiation of the comma from the semicolon, he uses both of these devices in a sentence, quite like the above, in the next paragraph of his essay. It is as follows:

59. It is here that composition is of service to the imagination, and incidentally to culture; and I should speak more largely of this service if there were space in this essay to bring forward all the aspects of college composition.

The need of the semicolon in both Nos. 58 and 59 is, we think, unmistakable.

The comma in No. 59 has no value for the reader. There is no *apparent* and *wrong* meaning here requiring this comma; and it is difficult to see how any wrong grouping, in the absence of the comma, is likely to be made by the reader. If this comma were challenged for its meaning we do not know what answer it could give.

The absence of a comma after "imagination" would give notice to the reader that what has been said about "imagination" is to be said about something else in the *and* relation to "imagination." The writer, wishing to qualify the added statement, does so before the statement is made, thus throwing matter (one word in this case) between what has preceded and what is to be grouped with "imagination," as shown by the absence of a mark before "and." This makes the qualifying word a modified parenthesis. Such treatment of the word, indicated by marks, gives a shade of meaning difficult to express in language. The difference is, perhaps, in the emphasis gained by the punctuation.

We should write the sentence in the following way:

59–1. It is here that composition is of service to the imagination and, incidentally, to culture; and I should speak more largely . . .

Our next sentence, which is taken from a well-known literary paper, is punctuated so badly that we wonder how it could pass an experienced proof-reader:

60. Providence made him a waif on London streets and later, a waif on the ocean, she taught him the feeling of a rope's end on a naked back.

When the reader reaches "and" in this sentence he needs to be informed by a mark of punctuation that what immediately follows the conjunction looks forward, not backward, for its connection. Such notice is always imperative when the words immediately following the conjunction may readily be attached by the reader to what precedes, but belong to what follows. In this sentence "a waif on the ocean" readily becomes the object of "made"; and even a very careful reader might so connect it, not discovering his mistake until he reached "she taught him." "Later" apparently looks backward to "made"; but its connection is forward.

Properly punctuated the sentence reads as follows:

60–1. Providence made him a waif on London streets; and, later, a waif on the ocean, she taught him the feeling of a rope's end on a naked back.

"Later" takes a comma before it because it is out of its natural order and also because it is placed in a position where it obstructs the smoothness of the language. The position of both "later" and "a waif on the ocean" gives force and beauty to the language; but they entangle, to a certain extent, the principal words of the sentence, thus requiring marks of punctuation to point out the proper relation between such words, as in Sentence 4–2.

Diagram 4 covers the punctuation exemplified in Sentence 6,—that is, punctuation based upon the rank of the colon.

The use of the colon that is properly differentiated from the uses of the semicolon and the period, respectively, is the use determined by its rank. This

particular use is exemplified in Sentences 6 and 6–2 and, to some extent, in Sentences 26–3 and 27–1. Writers who ignore the latter use of the colon—and they are many in number—apparently ignore the real relations between the parts of a sentence or of a composition; or, if they themselves see and appreciate such relations, they are willing to leave them obscurely expressed. It is quite probable that many writers do not know that marks of punctuation have inherent meanings which clearly express these relations. The lack of such knowledge is explained by the almost total absence of any discussion of the matter in the text-books on punctuation.

Our statement that Sentences 26–3 and 27–1 illustrate only "to some extent" the rank of the colon among the principal marks, may need explanation. In Sentences 6 and 6–2 the colon is used because a mark larger than the semicolon is required to group the parts of each sentence, one part being subdivided by semicolons. This use is wholly one of rank, and clearly differentiates the use of the mark. It is another sense relation of the parts of each of the other sentences (Nos. 26–3 and 27–1) that requires the colon, and not the presence of a semicolon in one of the parts. The colon would still be the only mark with an inherent meaning expressive of the relation between the parts even if there were no other mark in either sentence. The colon would still be the proper mark in No. 26–3 if it ended with "old," and in No. 27–1 if it ended with "evasions." The relation between the two groups following the colon in No. 26–3 is the *and* relation, each group being an expansion of a

picture in the main group,—that is, the first group (it never grows old) explains "perpetual charm," and the second group (it never loses its novelty) explains "singular charm." In No. 27–1 a conjunction (but) is present to show the sense relation at that point.

Our next sentence, which is from Balzac, will illustrate the points we are considering, and also show the difficulties the punctuator meets in the punctuation of language which he may not change:

61. He was all that a hero should be; he suffered long, and came into his own, and he has been, in a measure, the world's ideal of a heroic man of arms.

According to most rules of punctuation based upon grammatical relations, this punctuation is correct; according to the principles of punctuation based upon sense relations, this punctuation is very bad. The obscurity in the meaning of the language cannot be wholly removed by punctuation. Two simple statements are made in the sentence, and are coördinated by the second conjunction (and); but the language is so grouped by the punctuation as to conceal this fact. We can show the meaning by a different mode of punctuation, which, however, is not good punctuation. Such punctuation will show the relation because the meaning of the marks used is familiar to most readers:

61–1. He was all that a hero should be (he suffered long, and came into his own); and he has been, in a measure, the world's idea of a heroic man of arms.

The parentheses show the relation of the matter so enclosed to what has preceded; but the matter so

set off is not a parenthesis, and therefore the use of the marks of parenthesis is not good punctuation. It is true that the matter so set off is explanatory matter; but it is an expansion of the idea preceding it, and therefore should be preceded by a colon.

Having determined that a colon is the proper mark after this first group of words, we must then determine where the second group ends. It is quite evident that "came into his own" is joined to "suffered long," even though *coming into one's own* is no part of what constitutes a hero. We simply accept the words at Balzac's estimate.

The meaning of the next group, introduced by the second "and," is unmistakable; and the group is co-ordinate in sense, and is connected by the conjunction, with all that precedes. If the group preceding the conjunction is subdivided by a colon, even though the colon here is not used solely because of its rank, it is well to ignore this technicality, and use a period, thus unmistakably and properly grouping the language.

This reasoning would give us the following punctuation:

61–2. He was all that a hero should be: he suffered long, and came into his own. And he has been, in a measure, the world's ideal of a heroic man of arms.

The period here connects the second sentence with *all* of the preceding sentence, at once disconnecting the second sentence from the second clause of the first sentence, of which it is made an unmistakable part in the original sentence (No. 61).

This sentence illustrates the loose grouping common to many of our best writers; and it also shows that

marks of punctuation, if possessing clearly understood meanings, cannot be adjusted to loose groupings.

If the colon in No. 61–2 were considered like the colon in No. 25, and thus held subordinate to the semicolon, a semicolon would be preferable to the period that follows; yet very few readers would grasp such fine use of a mark in a sentence like No. 61–2.

Our next sentence illustrates a fault that is practically the opposite of the above; and its punctuation is much more common and even more distracting. It is the fault of splitting up a sentence, making two sentences out of one, or of carrying a part of one sentence over into another sentence, making two incomplete sentences. This fault grows out of an effort to use short sentences, which some writers think essential to clearness. It is quite safe to say few sentences are too long if the relations between their parts can clearly be shown by marks of punctuation.

We take the sentence from *The Outlook*. It appears in Dr. Abbott's "Reminiscences"; and, as Dr. Abbott is noted as an unusually clear and forceful writer, the sentence, with its context, is of special interest:

62. There were lawyers [in 1853–59] who promoted quarrels to get fees. But they were the pariahs of the profession. The best lawyers were peacemakers, and though, of necessity, professional partisans when engaged in litigation, they were generally honorable partisans.

That the third of the above sentences grows out of the first is clearly shown by the contrast between the kinds of lawyers mentioned: the former promoted

quarrels; the latter were *peacemakers.* Note also that each class is qualified: the first is qualified by "but they were the pariahs"; the second by "and were generally honorable partisans." The "and," which introduces a really qualifying clause, might properly have been "but," to show that as "peacemakers" these lawyers surrendered no rights of their clients, *but* contended for such rights when necessary to become "professional partisans."

As the sentences are written, the third sentence does not grow out of the sentence (the second) preceding it, but out of the first sentence; and such remoteness of parts standing in the close relation required in a contrast, is distracting.

We used a period in No. 61–2 because "and" there connects two complete sentences standing in the *and* relation to each other. We object to the use of a period in No. 62 where the conjunction (but) connects two sentences which are properly only one, and should be so written.

The points we wish to make may be seen by a slight change in the sentence:

62–1. There were lawyers who promoted quarrels to get fees; but they were the pariahs of the profession. The best lawyers were peacemakers; but, when engaged in litigation and it became necessary, they were professional partisans, though they were generally honorable partisans.

In order to see more clearly the differentiation between relations that require the semicolon and those that require the colon, let us study these relations in two sentences properly punctuated with each of the two marks:

63. The only true equalizers in the world are books; the only treasure-house open to all comers is a library; the only wealth which will not decay is knowledge.

64. Here was a superintendent worth having: when he did not find good tools, he made them.

Why not use commas or periods in No. 63? Why not use a semicolon in No. 64?

Perhaps we have not made, and cannot make, the differentiation between the comma and the semicolon sufficiently definite to answer the first question, especially as the formation of each of the three clauses is such that the liability to error in reading them is very slight. It would be rather dogmatic to assert that the use of commas here would be poor punctuation; yet the degree of separation between the groups is so marked as to make the relations more like the relations between groups that we have seen to require a semicolon than like relations between groups separated by a comma. The degree of separation here almost approaches the degree that takes the period; and therefore the semicolon seems much better than the comma.

But why not periods? Two positive answers may be given. The three clauses constitute one complete idea, and therefore make a sentence. If set off by periods, thus making three sentences, no fourth sentence could be formed to follow the third and maintain sentence unity; for the fourth sentence would necessarily grow out of the third, while its logical relation would be to the three clauses. Such a fault would be that seen in Sentence 62.

Why not a semicolon in No. 64? Because, under

our classifications and definitions, the colon, when its use is not determined by its rank, as it is in Sentence 6, is used to show a relation that is practically that of apposition, exhibited, in different forms, in Sentences 25 and 26–3. "A good superintendent" is explained by the expanded clause following the colon, just as "articles" in No. 25 is explained by the details that follow the colon.

In most sentences like No. 64 the second clause can be tied to the first by a conjunction (for, as, etc.); but the exact idea is not thus expressed. While this would sometimes show the sense relation between the clauses, it would distinctly weaken the force and beauty of the language, tending to make the second clause a specific, rather than a general, statement.

The differentiation between the semicolon and the colon in Nos. 63 and 64 is very clear if we recognize the colon as the mark of apposition or explanation. In No. 63 other clauses are added to the first to add other thoughts; in No. 64 the added clause repeats the thought of the first by way of amplification of such thought.

The greatest value of a mark of punctuation lies in its ability to indicate a meaning that depends upon the relation of one group of words to another; and so long as language has a literary value, just so long will the colon be useful as an aid in the expression of thought. This is illustrated in our next sentence (No. 65), where a semicolon, instead of the colon, would suggest the *and* relation, and thus make havoc of the sense:

65. Ethics has no summons to righteousness: it knows nothing of truth spiritually discerned.

If a period were used here, instead of the colon, the relation between the two sentences (clauses formed into sentences by the use of the period) might easily be taken for the *and* relation. With such relation between the clauses, the first clause would make a vague assertion, which, without an explanation, would convey no definite meaning.

In our discussion of Sentence 6 we saw that the colon, preceding "but," made the *but* relation extend back over several clauses separated by semicolons. "But" may begin a sentence, a paragraph, a part of a book, or even a volume. When beginning any one of such groups, the *but* relation should be a well-defined sense relation between the groups so connected. If "but" begins a paragraph, the sense relation must be between the two paragraphs connected by the conjunction. Such relation is rarely sustained between long paragraphs; and it does not exist between sentences nearly so often as it is indicated by the use of the conjunction and the period.

But, *and*, and *for* are the principal conjunctions thus used, although others are not infrequently so used.

COMMA AND SEMICOLON

The differentiation of the semicolon from the colon, and the colon from the period, seems to be so well marked that a choice between them is rarely difficult to make in the punctuation of language with proper sense relations between its parts; but the differentiation between the comma and the semicolon

is not so well defined, yet it is generally very clear in well-written English. Here the choice of a mark is determined, very largely, by the degree of separation between the groups. In order further to illustrate this point, let us compare No. 63 with a sentence which is quite like it, and yet requires only a comma between its clauses:

66. Experience is fallacious, and judgment difficult.

The first three words of the above form a clause which so completely expresses a thought that the addition, by means of the "and," of another adjective to follow "fallacious," is hardly suggested. On the other hand, this degree of completeness might suggest that what is to follow will be a complete clause so changing the direction of the thought as to require a semicolon to show the fact of the change. Let us look at the sentence diagrammatically:

66–1. Experience is fallacious and . . .

How will this sentence probably continue? This question confronts every intelligent reader, whether he realizes it or not, when reading the complete sentence. If the mark before "and," or the absence of a mark, conveys to him no information upon this point, he learns only through a tiresome mental process of ascertaining the correct relation of the words that follow "and" to the words that precede it. This process is one of holding in suspense two or more possible combinations. It is always distractive, and very often ends in a wrong combination. A semicolon before "and" would suggest that the preceding group of words is complete in itself, and is to be followed by

a complete and coördinate thought ("and" indicates the coördination) in the proper sense relation with the group that has preceded. It would at once preclude the expectation of an adjective coördinate with "fallacious."

We may complete the sentence thus:

66–2. Experience is fallacious; and therefore it is difficult for us to form correct judgments based upon experience.

To exhibit at once the sense relation between the two groups of words in the above (the relation of correct judgment to experience), we inserted the word "therefore"; to show that "and" is to be followed by a group grammatically coördinate with what precedes it, and of like form, we used a semicolon.

If the relation between the groups were closer than the relation suggested by the semicolon, but not so close as indicated by the absence of a mark, the comma would logically be the proper mark. It would suggest neither a word to be grouped with "fallacious" nor a clause to be grouped with all that precedes "and." It would suggest a different development of the sentence. Such development would tie what follows to a *part*, not to the *whole*, of what precedes; and, as there are but three words in this sentence preceding the mark, what follows must be tied to one of them, and not to the whole, as in No. 66–2. Two sentences will serve to illustrate the point:

66–3. Experience is fallacious, and may not safely be depended upon in the formation of correct judgment.

66–4. Experience is fallacious, and unreliable as a basis of correct judgment.

In No. 66–3 the comma notifies the reader that another adjective in the *and* relation to "fallacious," is not to follow.

In No. 66–4 the comma is used to confine "as a basis of correct judgment" to "unreliable," thus disconnecting it from "fallacious." This makes the language say that experience is fallacious *in all things*, and unreliable *only* as a basis of correct judgment.

If the reasoning in our discussion on the differentiation of the comma from the semicolon, be correct, it seems to establish a rule that the semicolon is the mark of choice between two clauses, whether joined by a conjunction or not. It is not entirely the length or the character of the groups of words that determines the choice. The liability to make wrong combinations, especially such combinations as are suggested by the apparent meaning of the language, is to be lessened by the mark.

In the absence of a mark in Sentence 1, a momentary wrong combination is quite unavoidable, because perfectly good sense is made by the wrong grouping. As a comma before "and" may not give to every reader notice of the development of the sentence, and as a semicolon could hardly fail to do so, it would seem to be the better mark.

In neither No. 66–3 nor No. 66–4 can the reader definitely interpret the meaning of the comma until one or two words following the conjunction are reached. As the process of determining a relation from a mark often requires the reader to consider the mark and one or two words following it, which process becomes almost instantaneous, a comma may thus

convey its purpose as readily as the semicolon in No. 66–2 tells its purpose.

A slight change in the language of Sentence 1 will not change either the names of the two groups (clauses) or their relation (coördination); but it will remove the liability, even the possibility, of such wrong combination as is suggested in Sentence 1:

66–5. Respect the rights of children and you will gain their respect.

In this sentence, a mark before "and" is not really needed as a warning to the reader not to connect "you" with "children," thus making "you" an object of the preposition "of."

The similarity in form between Nos. 1 and 66–5, with a mark of punctuation imperative in the first, suggests the use of a mark in the second. As the comma is here quite sufficient to prevent a wrong combination by the reader, the comma naturally becomes the mark of choice; and good convention confirms this choice, while convention not so good seems to ignore the need of the semicolon in similarly formed sentences in which the *apparent* and *wrong* grouping is much more marked than in Sentence 1.

Sentences 66 and 66–5 stand at one extreme of the class of sentences in the punctuation of which we seek to differentiate between the comma and the semicolon. The relation is made quite unmistakable by the shortness and completeness of the first group of words, and also by the fact that the word in each sentence following the conjunction does not suggest, even in the slightest degree, a connection for itself with anything that precedes.

Let us consider a sentence at the other extreme, where a wrong combination is wholly unavoidable without a semicolon, and quite suggestive with one:

66–6. I do not mean that the people are conscious of this fact; but that the leaders of the people are conscious of it, I think, there is no doubt.

In this sentence a semicolon is quite indispensable in order to disconnect the second group beginning with "that" from "mean," to which the preceding similarly formed group, beginning with "that," belongs.

Between these extremes are many sentences which may take either the comma or the semicolon without distractive effect. The close punctuator will generally prefer the semicolon; the open punctuator, the comma. (For a discussion of close and open punctuation, see Chapter XV.)

The degrees of variation in the relationship between parts of language are so great that a differentiation between the comma and the semicolon is at times almost impossible. Fortunately, a quite indiscriminate use of these two marks in the class of sentences under consideration is not always misleading or distractive to the reader; but the indiscriminate use of marks tends to lessen the importance attached by a reader to punctuation.

EXAMPLES

1. He suffered much, and he also suffered long.

2. Virtue is intolerant of vice, and virtue is just as contagious as vice ever was.

3. Be the first to say what is self-evident, and you are immortal.

4. In some states the legislatures meet annually, and in others biennially.

4–1. In some states the legislatures meet annually; in others, biennially.

5. Want of intellect makes a village an Eden, a college a sty.

In each of the first four examples above the relation between its groups is indicated by a conjunction; and the grouping is so readily apparent that the comma serves to show it.

In No. 4–1, in the absence of a conjunction, the semicolon at once shows that another clause is to follow as in No. 7, below. Such clause, however, is contracted by the omission of a group of words common to the two clauses. This omission is indicated by a comma in the second clause, which also shows that the two words in the group are not in any grammatical relation to each other.

In the first group of No. 5 we have a double object of the verb (explained later as requiring no comma), and the object is repeated, in form, in what follows the comma. The comma may be said to be used to indicate the omitted verb, or, as in Sentence 1–1, to indicate the relation.

6. The sentences of Seneca are stimulating to the intellect; the sentences of Epictetus are fortifying to the character; the sentences of Marcus Aurelius find their way to the soul.

7. In the world of reality suffering is not a thing to be read or heard or talked about, but a living truth. Being defied, it maketh for bitterness; or ignored, for selfishness; or accepted, for wisdom.

8. Venice, it has been said, differs from all other cities in the sentiment which she inspires. The rest may have admirers; she only, a famous fair one, counts lovers in her train.

9. Fame is what you have taken,
Character's what you give;
When to this truth you waken,
Then you begin to live.

10. Homer has not Shakespeare's variations: Homer always composes as Shakespeare composes at his best; Homer is always simple and intelligible, as Shakespeare is often; Homer is never quaint and antiquated, as Shakespeare is sometimes.

11. There are many beautiful letters in Cary's "Life of Curtis"; there is no other so beautiful as that written just after the death of Lincoln, nor is it possible to read it without a great trembling of the heart.

12. If there is ever a time to be ambitious, it is not when ambition is easy, but when it is hard. Fight in darkness; fight when you are down; die hard, and you won't die at all.

The comma before "and" in No. 12 divides the *semicolon* group into two parts, and does not stand between groups coordinate with the first and second groups.

"Die hard, and you won't die at all" is really a bull; and the incongruity of ideas might well be expressed by a dash before "and."

13. All association [among people] must be a compromise; and, what is worse, the very flower and aroma of the flower of each of the beautiful natures disappears as they approach each other.

14. All religions, even the most conservative and traditional, are in constant flux, they either advance or decay.

The above sentence is thus punctuated in the Enclycopedia Britannica and the New Standard Dictionary. We know of no

meaning of the comma that indicates the real sense relation between "in constant flux" and what follows. Nor is this relation that shown by the colon; for a thing,—for instance, the ocean,—may be *in constant flux*, and yet not either *advance* or *decay*.

The meaning of the language requires "and" after "flux," preferably with a semicolon before it.

15. Lily Dyer was a favorite with the village folk; she had just the qualities to arouse admiration. She was good and handsome and smart.

In the above example the *semicolon* relation does not exist between the groups of words (clauses) between which it is placed, for the second group does not add something to the first to make a complete thought. Moreover, the third group bears an unmistakable relation to the second group; and such relation is not the *period* relation. The language needs regrouping, to show the sense relations:

15–1. Lily Dyer was a favorite with the village folk. She had just the qualities to arouse admiration: she was good and handsome and smart.

16. It is a party which is as yet without a name. And what is even stranger, without a nickname.

No. 16 is a somewhat extreme, though common, result of seeking to make one's sentences short. No mark at all is needed, or permissible, before "and" in such a sentence:

16–1. It is a party without a name and, what is even stranger, without a nickname.

17. Polemic is always dreary. Devotion always interests. This is because men are nearly always wrong when they want their own way, and always partly right when they worship.

As the third sentence in the above example does not grow out of the sentence preceding it, sentence unity is destroyed; and, besides, the use of "this" clearly shows reference to a thought expressed in the *two* preceding sentences. A semicolon is the proper mark after "dreary," to make one sentence of the two, out of which the third grows.

18. Milton does not paint a finished picture, or play for a mere passive listener. He sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline. He strikes the key-note, and expects his hearers to make out the melody.

In this example sentence unity is wholly disregarded: the first picture is put into one sentence, instead of two; the second picture is put into two sentences, instead of one. Moreover, as the second picture is but an amplification of the first, both pictures may be put into one sentence, and should be so put, in accordance with the punctuation we have discussed.

As now punctuated, the second sentence does not grow out of the first, but out of the first half of the first; and the third sentence, instead of growing out of the second, grows out of the second half of the first, ignoring the second sentence entirely.

Uniting the second and third sentences by a semicolon will improve the grouping and the punctuation; but making one sentence out of the three is still better:

18–1. Milton does not paint a finished picture, or play for a mere passive listener: he sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline; he strikes the key-note, and expects his hearers to make out the melody.

The relations between the groups may be shown in another way; but such mode of expressing thought is not tolerable:

18–2. Milton does not paint a finished picture (he sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline), or play for a mere passive listener (he strikes the key-note, and expects his hearers to make out the melody).

CHAPTER VIII

COMMA, DASH, AND PARENTHESES THEIR DIFFERENTIATION

WE know of no writer who has attempted to differentiate the above marks; but some writers have dismissed the subject by saying that these marks are interchangeable. Such a statement, we believe, is merely a confession of failure to comprehend the inherent meanings of the marks, and the need of giving marks definite meanings. The confusion resulting from such failure is, at least at this point, chaos in punctuation and, not infrequently, in the meaning of language so punctuated.

Mr. Garrison,[1] in his able *Atlantic* article, says: "Dash, comma, and parenthesis have equal title to employment in this sentence of Thackeray's." The following is the sentence punctuated in the three ways recognized by Mr. Garrison as correct punctuation:

67. If that theory be, and I have no doubt it is, the right and safe one.

67-1. If that theory be (and I have no doubt it is) the right and safe one.

67-2. If that theory be—and I have no doubt it is—the right and safe one.

Let us first ask why any mark is required before "and" in the sentence, and then what the mark, if used, says to the writer. When the reader reaches

[1] See page vi.

the conjunction, two questions at once confront him: First, does "and" connect the words between which it immediately stands? second, does "and" carry the *if* meaning over to the second group of words? As "and" does not connect the words between which it immediately stands, some mark is suggested; and that mark is the comma, but a comma may not clearly exclude *if* from the second group. If the *if* meaning is not to be conveyed, a larger grouping is suggested; and this would call for a semicolon, which would *more widely* separate parts (subject and predicate) of the whole sentence which should be held together.

The *and* relation is here what we may call a strained one; in fact, the *and* relation hardly exists in this sentence.

The punctuation of No. 67–1 is all right if we accept a meaning of the term *parenthesis* that will cover the group of words we are here dealing with; but the punctuation is wholly wrong if we use marks according to fundamental principles. Both the New International and the New Standard dictionaries give definitions of a parenthesis that are incomplete and misleading. Their definitions are almost identical in their wording, and call a parenthesis, in substance, a group of words inserted, for explanation or qualification, "in a sentence which would be grammatically complete without it." This definition ignores both the root meaning of the word and the common usage of the parenthesis. It is an excellent definition for an *explanatory* word or group of words, except a complete explanatory sentence, which we set off by commas, as shown in our discussion of Sen-

tence 11 *et seq.* We do not know what would become, under this definition, of a parenthesis in the form of a complete sentence; for the definition confines the parenthesis to a word or words inserted *in a sentence.*

The Century gives a definition that is based upon the Greek roots of the word *parenthesis*, as well as upon its use by good writers. According to this definition, a parenthesis has *no grammatical* relation with the language into which it is "put." (The word *thrust* would perhaps give a clearer idea of the original.) We "parenthesize" in spoken, as well as in written or printed, language; but in the former we convey the meaning by inflections and pauses, while in the latter we convey the meaning by marks of punctuation.

The use of the conjunction (and) in the sentence under consideration clearly takes the inserted group of words out of the proper definition of a parenthesis; for it puts such words into *grammatical* connection with what precedes, although the words are quite strongly parenthetical in nature.

Now, having eliminated the comma, the semicolon, and the parentheses as the proper marks for setting off this group of words *thrust* into the sentence, and still making good sense by their grammatical connection, how shall we punctuate them? It is perfectly evident that this group of words makes a decided *break* in the thread of the thought, and that they do not have logical or natural connection with what precedes, because the true *and* relation does not exist between the thoughts, implied or expressed. Such language may be said to be idiomatic and there-

fore proper; but the group of words is not properly set off in either No. 67 or No. 67–1. As the fundamental use of the dash is to note such a break in language as here occurs, it is the proper mark before "and" in this sentence. In language of this kind it may be said that the writer *dashes* off the track of his thought for a moment; and therefore the dash is the proper mark to indicate such a break in the continuity of thought.

The second dash is used to close the group in the same way that the second comma of a pair of commas, or the second part of the marks of parenthesis, is used; and this makes the punctuation of No. 67–2 correct punctuation, for it is based upon the fundamental meanings of both the marks and the sense relations of the words.

This careless use of the marks of parenthesis, especially as in No. 67–1, is quite common in some literary periodicals of high standing and in not a few large printing establishments; but, we venture to assert, it is rare among painstaking writers who punctuate their own writings.

Such use of marks utterly prevents a differentiation between commas and parentheses; and this disregard of sense relations finds an exact parallel in a disregard, only too common among careless writers, of such fundamental differences in meanings as exists between the words *vocation* and *avocation*.

Let us also note that groups of words defined in Chapter III as "slightly parenthetical" do not make any break in the thread of thought, so that Sentence 67 is not at all similar to such sentences as were con-

sidered in that connection. In further proof of this statement, let us compare Sentence 67 with Sentence 10–2. If the *and* relation in No. 67 does not exist between the two groups of words (all that precedes it, and what follows it up to "is"), the group "I have no doubt" should be set off by commas, as is a similar group in Sentence 10–2. This punctuation would make "and" connect "be" and "it is," which would not make sense.

If it is not now clear that the punctuation of Nos. 67 and 67–1 violates the fundamental principles of the meanings of both marks and sense relations, it may be worth while to consider the subject further.

Mr. Teall does not go quite so far as Mr. Garrison, who puts the three marks into a class from which any one may be selected for the punctuation of Sentence 67. Mr. Teall, however, makes the following statement (page 50): "As in some instances there is no absolute choice between commas and parentheses, so also there is none between parentheses and dashes." He illustrates the latter part of his statement, but not the former. His illustrative example is a sentence taken from Mr. Wilson's work, which sentence, he says, may take either the parentheses or the dashes. We give the sentence (No. 68) as punctuated by Mr. Wilson:

68. If we exercise right principles (and we can not have them unless we exercise them), they must be perpetually on the increase.

Mr. Teall evidently agrees with Mr. Wilson in the punctuation of the sentence, which, he says, may

as well take dashes; but he expresses no choice between the two modes of punctuation.

We have already said that this punctuation violates fundamental principles; and that it does so is evidenced by Mr. Wilson's definitions. In one place (page 168) he defines a parenthesis as "words thrown obliquely into the body of a sentence"; and on the preceding page he says a parenthesis is "an expression inserted in the body of a sentence,[1] with which it has no connection in sense or in construction." Mr. Teall gives a like definition of a parenthesis.

The meaning of "obliquely thrown into" is, we think, unmistakable. It is equivalent to "thrust into," and characterizes matter that is "without grammatical connection."

It does not seem to us true that the parenthesis (group of words) in No. 68 has "no connection in sense" with the sentence. As "and" gives it constructive connection, why does "and" not give it sense relation? and why is "and" used, what does it mean, and what does it connect?

The punctuation of No. 67–2 seems to us to be in accord with the fundamental meanings that determine the use of marks; and it at once differentiates the dash from the two other marks. These principles are violated in the punctuation of No. 68, which requires dashes.

COMMAS AND PARENTHESES

The differentiation of the comma, or commas, from parentheses, is the differentiation of the *purely*

[1] The use of this comma is wrong, for what follows "sentence" is clearly restrictive.

parenthetical from the *slightly* parenthetical. The purely parenthetical word or expression is wholly detached from the essential meaning of the language in which it is found, and properly takes marks of parenthesis as evidence of this fact; the slightly parenthetical is in grammatical relation with some word or words in the language in which it appears.

An excellent illustration of such erroneous definitions of a parenthesis as is noted above, and of a lack of differentiation between the semicolon and the period, is found in the following sentence, which is the opening sentence of the preface to a work on the proper use of words, written, we believe, by one who was formerly a college professor of English:

69. The author's main purpose in this book is to teach precision in writing; and of good writing (which, essentially, is clear thinking made visible) precision is the point of capital concern.

From our point of view the principal faults of this sentence are the following:

1. The *and* relation between the two clauses "and" here connects, is a strained one. The real relation between them would be better expressed by a period without the conjunction.

2. The *explanatory* group of words set off by parentheses is not a *parenthesis*, and therefore should not be enclosed in marks of parenthesis. Commas are the proper marks.

DASHES AND PARENTHESES

The indiscriminate substitution of dashes and parentheses for commas, which is quite common in

some literary periodicals and in some books by authors of recognized literary ability, greatly weakens the value of marks; for there can be no differentiation between the marks so used, and, consequently, the first part of either mark fails to give to the reader notice of what is to follow. The value of the punctuation is thus weakened. In some sentences, such use of these marks is not objectionable; but the necessity of the substitution is not always apparent.

The occasional substitution of parentheses for commas, where the use of semicolons is thus avoided, is desirable; but the occasion for such use is rare. In the following sentence the use of commas is strictly correct, but the result is not pleasing:

70. The following were appointed a committee on organization: John Smith, chairman, Henry Jones, and William Brown.

This punctuation seems to throw the four nouns following the colon into a series. This effect can be avoided by the use of a semicolon after "chairman"; but this punctuation would require another semicolon after "Jones," thus grouping the words as words are grouped in Sentences 7, 7–1, and 7–2. The better punctuation of sentences like this is to enclose the descriptive word in parentheses, and retain the commas for the other words:

70–1. The following were appointed a committee on organization: John Smith (chairman), Henry Jones, and William Brown.

It seems surprising that good writers will adopt the punctuation of No. 70, and use it when it tends to obscure the sense. As illustrative of this point,

we give a sentence from the current issue of the *Literary Digest:*

71. This new magnet is used for the study of light, the motions of electrons, the smallest components of matter, and the minute movements in the interior of an atom.

For the sake of clearness, which is a chief object of punctuation, the sense relations of the things named in this sentence as objects of study should be shown by the punctuation. As "electrons" are "the smallest components of matter," the punctuation should reveal the fact:

71–1. This new magnet is used for the study of light, the motions of electrons (the smallest components of matter), and the minute movements in the interior of an atom.

By reserving dashes for the large groups of words which are purely parenthetical in nature, but are tied to what precedes by a connective, generally a conjunction or a preposition, we do not violate the fundamental meaning of either the dash or the marks of parenthesis; and therefore when we meet either mark its meaning is unmistakable. In short, we do not make a mark serve an additional and unnecessary use, and so render it more difficult to interpret as a sign-board.

When we speak of the "fundamental" meaning of a mark, we refer to the meaning implied in its name, the name, of course, being descriptive of a feature of the language which is to be pointed out by the mark. The word *dash*, as has already been said, points out that the writer has *dashed* aside, as it were, in his line

of thought, and is going to "parenthesize" something, keeping his thought, however, *grammatically* connected with what precedes. We violate this principle in the use of the single dash exemplified in Sentence 33, just as we violate a fundamental principle in the use of the parentheses in No. 70–1. We think there is no objection to the former use of the dash; for it serves a good purpose, and its meaning can hardly be mistaken. The relation indicated by the comma and dash is suggested before the mark is reached, as, in Sentence 33, details are suggested by the words "three original parties."

The indiscriminate use of dashes and parentheses for commas has become quite common; but, after a very careful study of language thus punctuated, we can find no justification or excuse for such usage. It may give the writer a choice of marks, but it gives no light to the reader. It is too much like using either red or yellow for a danger-signal when red better answers the purpose.

Although the differentiation between commas and parentheses is at times somewhat difficult, generally it is very easy. The following sentences will illustrate common uses of the marks where the shades of meaning are nice, but unmistakable:

72. Ian Maclaren (Dr. John Watson) wrote "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush."

73. Ian Maclaren, a noted Scotch minister (Dr. John Watson), is the author of "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush."

74. Ian Maclaren (the pen-name of Dr. John Watson) is unmistakably Scotch.

In No. 72 "Dr. John Watson" is purely parentheti-

cal matter, used to give the reader some information about the *name* of the man already mentioned. As we have been talking about the man, the information about his name is like an aside,—that is, it is purely parenthetical. This matter may be omitted without affecting the sense of the language in any manner; and, as it is purely parenthetical, it properly takes the marks of parenthesis.

In No. 73 we have both an explanatory group of words and a parenthesis. The first is equivalent to "who is a noted Scotch minister." In either form it is an essential part of the information the writer wishes to convey. We have already defined such a group as *slightly parenthetical*, to be set off by commas.

No. 74 is a particularly distractive sentence, although its punctuation may be technically correct. The first picture given in this sentence to the reader is that of a man; the next one, given by the parenthesis, is that of a name. A third thought follows; and this thought is applicable to either a *man* or a *name*. As "Watson" is an Irish name, the question may arise in reading No. 74 whether the writer wishes to say "Ian Maclaren," the *man*, is Scotch, or "Ian Maclaren," the *name*, is Scotch.

There is a conventional way of writing a name of this kind to show that the name is referred to merely as a word. This is done by the use of italics or quotation-marks; and therefore to avoid the distractive effect of No. 74, it may be written thus:

74–1. ***Ian Maclaren*** **(the pen-name of Dr. John Watson) is unmistakably Scotch.**

Here the italics notify the reader that he is to

consider the name, not the person named; and this name is a Scotch word.

Like notice would be given by the use of quotation-marks in place of the italics.

The distractive effect caused by producing two impressions through a wrong use of marks of parenthesis, should be avoided.

EXAMPLES

1. I am a lady, and a coward.
2. I am a lady and—a coward.

In No. 1 the comma makes "a coward" an afterthought. In No. 2 the dash shows a hesitancy on the part of the writer about calling herself, or one (a lady) of her sex, a coward. The shade of meaning between the two sentences is clearly marked.

3. On these occasions I have been grateful to the happy accident, or design, that made me a participant in such scenes.
4. On these occasions I have been grateful to the happy accident—or design?—that made me a participant in such scenes.

In No. 3 the commas indicate an afterthought; in No. 4 the writer makes an aside, as if asking someone a question, thus requiring a dash to show the change in thought.

5. The Syracuse (New York) *Journal* asserts that the spoilsman must go.
6. The following sentence contains three nouns: Do (1) good by (2) stealth, and blush to find it (3) fame.
7. She walked away, a very straight, beautiful—yes, certainly beautiful—young figure, and disappeared.
8. Crime is merely an unrebuked temptation, a

natural instinct running at large,—a very natural thing.

In No. 8 the second group is a mere appositive or definition of the first; but the third group is a restatement of the thought implied in the two preceding groups. The comma shows the relation; the dash does the grouping.

9. The examination embraces spelling, punctuation, the use of capital letters, grammar, arithmetic, geography (descriptive and physical), languages, etc.

10. If you will take my advice, you will throw that letter into the fire. (A bright one was blazing on the hearth.) If you keep it, it will probably tempt you into an outlay beyond your means.

11. His voice and manner,—the manner of the old Oxford scholar of the best type, and, alas! of a bygone generation, with its indescribable indication of cultured and lettered ease,—were singularly attractive.

12. Measure as we may the progress of the world,—materially, in the advantages of steam, electricity, and other mechanical appliances; sociologically, in the great improvements in the conditions of life; intellectually, in the diffusion of education; morally, in a possibly higher standard of ethics,—there is no one measure which can compare with the decrease of physical suffering in man, woman, and child when stricken by disease or accident.

The consideration of the use of the dash in No. 12 does not strictly fall in this chapter; and yet its position gives what follows it the appearance of an aside with grammatical connection (apposition) with what precedes. "As we may" is equivalent to "in any manner"; and the matter set off by dashes gives details of "in any manner," or, more strictly, of "measure in any manner."

Let us here note, parenthetically, that if "as we may" were

changed to "as we can," these words would be set off by commas, being simply an explanatory group, and not a restrictive group, as they are now, being equivalent to "in whatever way."

13. Shooting stars are only little masses of matter,—bits of rock or metal, or cloudlets of dust and gas,—which are flying unresisted through space, just as planets and comets do, in paths which, within the limits of our solar system, are controlled by the attraction of the sun.

Why not use marks of parentheses in No. 13, instead of dashes? The reason lies in the meaning of the former marks. If "matter" or "little masses of matter" were an obscure term requiring explanation, the explanatory term would properly take the form of a parenthesis; but we have here a mere apposition, used by way of example or illustration, as we might use the words apples and pears to explain what we mean by the word fruit in a sentence.

14. That child of so many prayers, who was to bear the significant name of John (Jehochanan, "the Lord is gracious") was to be the source of joy and gladness to a far wider circle than that of the family.

15. Such scanty record was kept of Sebastian Cabot's voyages of 1497 and 1498 that we cannot tell what land the Cabots first saw,—whether it was the bleak coast of Northern Labrador, or some point as far South as Cape Breton.

15–1. Such scanty record was kept of Sebastian Cabot's voyages of 1497 and 1498 that we cannot tell what land the Cabots first saw; whether it was the bleak coast of Northern Labrador, or some point as far South as Cape Breton, is still a matter of dispute.

The differentiation between the comma in No. 15 (here aided by a dash) and the semicolon in No. 15–1, is very plain;

and each mark, when reached, unmistakably notifies the reader what relation exists between what precedes and what follows it.

When one is reading these sentences aloud, each mark determines the voice-inflection that will convey the meaning to the listener.

16. An ellipsis or omission of words is found in all kinds of composition. (Remarks *d* and *i*.)

17. When a quotation is short, and closely connected with the words preceding it, a comma between the parts is sufficient.—See page 108.

18. Capitalize the exclamations "O" and "Oh" (see chap. iii, sec. 6).

19. In resolutions, italicize the word "*Resolved*," but not the word "Whereas." (See chap. iv, sec. 36.)

The above four examples show a variety of treatment of reference matter (real or apparent) that is perplexing, not only because of the sources of the examples, but because the same is found many times in the books from which the examples are taken. Nos. 16 and 17 are from Mr. Wilson's work, and Nos. 18 and 19 are from "A Manual for Writers."

No. 16 is one of a number of examples to be punctuated according to a preceding rule and the "Remarks" under such rule. (The punctuation of No. 16 is to follow "Remarks *d* and *i*," which require commas before and after "or omission.") Thus "Remarks *d* and *i*" above is purely parenthetical matter in its relation to the language of the example. As it explains no word or group of words within the example it is treated as an independent sentence, and is therefore properly punctuated.

No. 17 is a "Remark" under a general rule. "See page 108" is a part of this "Remark." Instead of condensing the information found on page 108 and adding it to what precedes, in the example such information, additional to and not explanatory of what precedes it, takes the form of a sentence,—"See page 108." It has no reference by way of explanation to what precedes, but stands for an additional sentence. It also belongs in another paragraph; and this fact is shown by the dash, the use of which here is purely conventional punctuation.

We do not understand why the references in Nos. 18 and 19 should not be treated alike. We think No. 19 is correct, except that "Resolved" should not here be italicized. It is properly italicized in a resolution, while "Whereas" in a resolution should be written with a capital and small-capital letters.

NOTE.—We do not think that "oh" is often written with a capital, except when it begins a sentence.

20. None of the ills from which England is at present suffering are due to democracy or to freedom, but to inherited conditions and traditions which British democracy (one of the finest and most devoted bodies of men and women in the world) has been working manfully to throw off. These go back to the days—not yet wholly past—of British Imperialism and paternalism.

The above example is a good illustration of the improper use of both the dash and the marks of parenthesis. The group of words enclosed in parenthesis is an appositive of "British democracy," appositional in form and adjectival in meaning. The group of words set off by dashes is adjectival in both form and meaning. Each group is explanatory, not restrictive; and therefore, according to the principals we have disscussed herein, each should be set off by commas.

CHAPTER IX

MISCELLANEOUS USES OF MARKS

ADJECTIVES BEFORE A NOUN

WHEN two or more adjectives come before a noun, and are not connected by a conjunction, the meaning to be conveyed determines the punctuation:

75. This is a large wild grape.
75–1. This is a large, wild grape.

The punctuation is correct in each of the above sentences; but the two sentences do not mean the same.

Sentence No. 75 says that the grape is a large one in the class of *wild grapes*, confining the comparison to wild grapes.

Sentence No. 75–1 says that the grape is large and is wild. It is large in comparison with all kinds of grapes.

In No. 75 we give the language its natural meaning. In No. 75–1 we use a comma to show that the natural meaning is not the meaning we wish to convey; we disconnect "large" from "wild grape," as, in Sentence 1–1, we disconnected words standing in an *apparent* relation which was not the *real* relation.

Other examples at the end of this chapter will further illustrate the punctuation.

DOUBLE OBJECT

We have already seen that nouns standing together require some mark between them if their ap-

parent relation is not their real relation. This principle was illustrated especially in Sentence 8–1.

The so-called double object furnishes an apparent exception to the principle. The relation, however, between such words is as regular as the relation between an adjective and a noun when the former precedes the latter. Thus the following sentence requires no mark between the nouns constituting a so-called double object:

76. They elected John Smith president.

A similar relation is seen when the first noun in a sentence like the above is followed by an adjective. The relation is regular, and calls for no mark:

76–1. They called John Smith wise.

In some cases the relation may be more idiomatic than regular, the mark being omitted because there is no real need for its use. The next sentence exhibits such relationship:

77. I myself will undertake the work.

A "LONG" SUBJECT

When a subject is composed of two or more words, and these words do not readily group themselves, a comma may be helpful to group them as a subject. This failure of words to fall readily into a group is generally due to one of three causes: the subject may be somewhat long and contain marks of punctuation, or it may end with a word that seems itself to sustain grammatical and sense relation with the word or words following it, or it may end with a verb. In either of such cases the comma serves to show the end

of the subject; and its use is therefore helpful punctuation:

78. Whatever is, is right.

79. He that sees a building as a common spectator, contents himself with speaking of it in the most general terms.

The use of the comma after "spectator" simply warns the reader that "the spectator contents himself" is not the meaning of the language at this point. The comma disconnects "spectator" and "contents," just as the comma disconnects certain words in Sentence 1–1. Thus the punctuation of this sentence depends upon the fundamental principle of *grouping* and *disjunction.*

This principle also explains the value of a comma at the end of several subject-nouns not connected by a conjunction:

80. Ease, indulgence, luxury, sloth, are the sources of misery.

With the conjunction "and" before "sloth," the comma after "sloth" would not be needed, as "and" and the comma before it would give notice of the ending of the group.

The value of a comma in No. 79 is unmistakable; but is such punctuation helpful when the subject clearly ends itself, either because of its manifest completeness or because there is no apparent relation between the last word of the subject and the predicate verb? Probably a definite and satisfactory answer to this question cannot be given, for the mental capacity and alertness of the reader are involved.

DOUBTFUL MODIFIERS

Perhaps more obscurity in language, often resulting in hurtful misunderstandings and expensive litigation, grows out of doubtful modifiers than out of any other source of bad construction. A knowledge of punctuation here serves a very useful purpose, not always by putting the proper mark in the proper place, but generally by showing the writer the necessity of recasting his sentence, thus removing the cause of any possible wrong interpretation. Punctuation points out the danger; the writer removes it.

What did Smith write according to the wording and punctuation of the following sentence?

81. Smith wrote part of the preface and Chapter I.

It says clearly that Smith wrote *part* of the preface and *part* of Chapter I.

And what does the next sentence say he wrote?

81–1. Smith wrote part of the preface, and Chapter I.

It says that Smith wrote *part* of the preface, and *all* of Chapter I.

It is not wise to make the meaning of language, especially in important matters, depend upon a mode of punctuation little understood. The wise way is to recast the language. Legal phraseology grew out of the difficulty of so writing as to make one's meaning unmistakable; but it went to the extreme in verbiage, and has become distasteful even to lawyers. Such verbiage is not necessary to express one's meaning.

Our next sentence is particularly informing to us in our efforts to establish two or three fundamental principles governing the use of all marks:

82. Life may be held so pure, so receptive to all high influence, so noble in its aspirations, as to furnish the right conditions for these finer promptings; or it may so degenerate into the material, the selfish, the self-centered, as to become deaf and blind and unresponsive to them.

The comma after "aspirations" is used to disconnect the two groups of words between which it stands, thus breaking up an apparent group (so noble in its aspirations as to furnish the right conditions for these finer promptings), and forming out of it two groups, each of which begins with "so," each group having for its complement the group beginning with "as."

We perhaps may not say that the comma after "aspirations" at once gives notice of the relation of each of the preceding groups to what follows; but, when the comma cuts "as" off from the preceding "so," it shows that "as" introduces a group completing each of the preceding groups introduced by "so." This disconnection between the last two groups compels the reader to make the new grouping.

In the second of the larger groups of this sentence occurs a somewhat similar grouping made by "so—as." Here the comma is used, just as it is used in Sentence 80, to mark the end of the first part of the group. Its use in both clauses may be said to follow the punctuation diagrammatically exhibited in Sentence 3–2. In No. 82 the reader suspends the thought partially expressed by "so pure" until he reaches the complementary group of words beginning with "as." This process of suspending the thought occurs in this clause after each group introduced by "so." The process, instead of being difficult, is well-nigh intui-

tive, for "so" naturally raises the expectation of the correlative "as," which introduces the complement of each group introduced by "so."

Let us also note the last grouping in this sentence, where "to them" is tied to each of the three preceding adjectives by the grouping *ands*, thus requiring no mark after the last adjective.

INTERMEDIATE RESTRICTIVE GROUPS

Probably at no other point in punctuation do writers obscure the meaning of language so much as in dealing with *restrictive* and *explanatory* groups of words. We dealt with the subject in Chapter III, but passed over one feature of it,—namely, the intermediate restrictive group, or a restrictive group coming between two other groups closely tied together in sense, and seemingly requiring the suspension of the intermediate group by commas.

Before dealing with these groups, let us consider an interesting sentence, from very high authority, which tends to confirm our statement concerning the importance of properly punctuating restrictive and explanatory modifiers. The sentence is from a passage in Dean Alford's notable book, "A Plea for the Queen's English," in which passage the Dean severely scolds compositors for their bad punctuation, particularly for the insertion of commas "without the slightest compunction."

83. I have some satisfaction in reflecting, that, in the course of editing the Greek text of the New Testament, I believe I have destroyed more than a thousand commas, which prevented the text being properly understood.

Mr. De Vinne quotes the passage in which this

sentence appears; and he does so in apparent approval of Dean Alford's condemnation of the misuse of commas. Mr. De Vinne makes a single comment upon the passage, in which he says "the last comma in this extract is superfluous." The reference is to the comma before "which."

The comma before "which" is not simply "superfluous": it is *wrong*. It is wrong because it changes the meaning of the language by making the writer say, apparently, that he destroyed *all* the commas in the text, while he, unquestionably, intended to say he destroyed more than a thousand *offending* commas, that is, commas *that* (which) *obscured the text.*

The superfluous comma in the above sentence is, in our opinion, the one after "reflecting." This comma is used in accordance with the convention of Dean Alford's day, and follows a rule of "close" punctuation.

But the punctuation is very bad at another point; and, we venture to say, in spite of the great distinction of its author as an English scholar, the language at this point is not the "Queen's English." Omitting the intermediate and final groups of words, and the superfluous comma, the sentence will read as follows:

83–1. I have some satisfaction in reflecting that I believe I have destroyed more than a thousand commas.

"Satisfaction in reflecting *that I believe*," is, to say the least, a curious satisfaction. This is not the meaning the writer wished to convey.

The obvious error cannot be mended by setting "I believe" off with commas, for this would simply throw doubt upon the statement which follows (I have

destroyed), which is a positive statement, needing no qualification. The only doubtful assertion in the sentence is as to the *number* of commas destroyed. The evident meaning of the language is, that the number of commas destroyed is *probably* (I believe) more than a thousand. To be sure, "probably" and "I believe" are not exactly equivalent terms; but the word *probably* here serves to show how "I believe" is used. We set it off by commas because of its slightly parenthetical character.

The entire sentence should be written thus:

83–2. I have some satisfaction in reflecting that, in the course of editing the Greek text of the New Testament, I have destroyed, I believe, more than a thousand commas which prevented the text being properly understood.

The absence of a comma before the *adjective* group of words beginning with "which," tells the reader that such adjective group is *restrictive*, thus confining the destruction to *harmful* commas.

Let us turn aside again to ask why, in the sentence above and beginning with "The evident," "probably" takes no commas, while a similar expression (I believe) in No. 83–2 requires them. "Probably" here requires no commas because it coalesces with "more"; while "I believe" does not do so, but makes a decided break in the smoothness of the sentence. The latter expression is like an aside, thus becoming slightly parenthetical. The use of commas with "probably" would make "probably" more emphatic, because the pauses thus indicated would call special attention to it. Such use is good punctuation.

We will now turn to a restrictive group of words

that comes between two other groups closely connected in meaning.

Mr. Wilson treats this subject at length, but, we think, in an unsatisfactory way. We find in the wording of one of his rules an illustration of this mode of punctuation which seems more informing than his discussion of the subject. As we do not desire to consider the subject-matter of Mr. Wilson's rule, we make up a sentence modeled upon its language:

84. When books, that have been thoroughly examined and unqualifiedly approved by a board of college professors, are recommended by a teacher, her pupils should not refuse to read them.

The adjective group of words following "books" is restrictive. It is perhaps made more clearly so by the use of a pronoun (that) formerly used, in the place of *who* or *which*, to introduce a *restrictive* adjective in the form of a pronominal group of words.

If "which" be substituted for "that" in this sentence, the restrictive character of the group may not be so readily apparent; but this would not change the punctuation recommended by Mr. Wilson. Let us deal with the sentence in this form:

84–1. When books, which have been thoroughly examined and unqualifiedly approved by a board of college professors, are recommended by a teacher, her pupils should not refuse to read them.

If it is deemed helpful punctuation to set off by commas the group of words between "books" and "are," in order to show clearly the dependence of "books" upon "are recommended," then commas are required. If, on the other hand, we wish to show

by the punctuation that the group of words following "books" is restrictive, we must omit the comma after "books." Thus, apparently, we must here make a choice between two modes of punctuation. As failure to distinguish by punctuation the character of a qualifier,—that is, whether restrictive or explanatory,—not infrequently totally obscures the sense, we do not quite like a rule that calls for a comma before a restrictive group of words.

The sentence may be written without a comma after "books," but with one after "professors." The use of the latter would follow the punctuation of No. 79. This mode of punctuation is, after all, only a choice between two modes of punctuation. The better way is to recast all such sentences. No. 84 may be recast in several ways; but it is difficult, without introducing a new word, clearly to express the fact that *one kind* of books is meant, as shown in the restrictive adjective in both Nos. 84 and 84–1.

We suggest the following form for the recast sentence:

84–2. When *certain* books have been thoroughly examined and unqualifiedly approved by a board of college professors, and have been recommended by a teacher, her pupils should not refuse to read them.

Every restrictive word or group of words confines the meaning of the word or words so modified to a *certain* thing or *certain* things. The man *who was here yesterday* means a *certain* man, and means so because of the restrictive group of words following "man"; but "the man, *who was here yesterday*," is not so designated by the same group of words set off

by commas. These points were considered in another place in this book.

NOT—BUT

The punctuation of intermediate groups of words gives rise to a peculiar phraseology, which needs explanation. We have seen that the intermediate group is set off by commas to show that the sense is suspended at the point where the first comma is placed, to be continued by connection with what follows the complementary comma. We illustrated this process diagrammatically in Sentence 4–3 by actually suspending on the printed page the intermediate group.

We do not hesitate to use commas in the following sentence:

85. His success was attained, not by ability and enterprise, but by friendly assistance.

If we suspend or omit the intermediate group in the above we obtain a result which is not a good sentence:

85–1. His success was attained but by friendly assistance.

We can say of such language as that of No. 85 only that it is *idiomatic*, thus justifying it as we justify the grammatical solecism "*than whom.*"

Mr. Wilson makes an exception to this mode of punctuation that is very perplexing; and it is probably because of this that few, if any, other writers refer to or deal with it.

We shall not attempt to discuss Mr. Wilson's rule, but let us consider one of his examples:

86. It *is not* from wild beasts, but from untamed passions, that the greatest evils arise to human society.

We think the omission of a comma after "is," thus suspending the negative group beginning with "not," is justified, if at all, by the fact that such a sentence is usually read without a pause after the verb; in other words, the language thus readily groups itself, and shows the meaning and the force of the negative intermediate group.

Not a few good writers use a comma before "not" in sentences like No. 86.

If one or more words intervene between the verb and the negative particle, the parts of the sentence do not coalesce, and the comma is required.

87. He came not to teach, but to be taught.

87–1. He came here, not to teach, but to be taught.

If we change the form of No. 87, we may perhaps see somewhat more clearly why this grouping is more natural than would be a grouping made by a comma after the verb (came):

87–2. He did not come to teach, but to be taught.

No. 87–2 seems to show that the grouping made by the comma in No. 87 is a natural grouping.

In spite of Mr. Wilson's rule, and of our reasoning to explain it, we believe that each mode of punctuating the following sentence is correct, each depending upon where the emphasis is to be laid:

88. The book's primary aim is, not to convince the skeptic, but to solve the difficulties of the best-thinking men.

88–1. The book's primary aim is not to convince the skeptic, but to solve the difficulties of the best-thinking men.

In No. 88 the emphasis is placed upon "to solve

the difficulties," the preceding group being thrown in for contrast, thus heightening the effect of the statement made in the next group of words.

In No. 88–1 the emphasis falls upon "not to convince the skeptic," just as it would if written, "It is not the book's aim to convince the skeptic."

Let us note carefully that the mode of punctuation in each of the two preceding sentences would grow out of the context, which would clearly tell where the emphasis was to be laid.

We have dwelt upon this punctuation in order to emphasize a purpose of punctuation too often overlooked.

O and OH

The Century Dictionary says there is no difference between *O* and *oh* except that of their present spelling. The New Standard and Webster's New International do not go so far, but they point out the difference observed by most good writers.

O is generally used only in direct address; and, as the name of the person or thing addressed immediately follows it, it takes no mark of punctuation after it. An exclamation-point may follow the group of words introduced by *O*. Its vocative character is not lost when the person or thing addressed is not named, for it may be understood.

O is used more in poetry than in prose.

O is used in an ejaculatory expression when followed by *for* or *that*. It does not here seem to lose its vocative character, although the name of the thing or person addressed may not readily be supplied.

O is sometimes used colloquially in expressions like "O my!" "O dear!" etc.

Oh is purely ejaculatory, and takes a comma or an exclamation-point immediately after it; but the latter mark may follow the group of words beginning with *oh*, with a comma before *oh*.

O is always written with a capital, but *oh* takes a capital only when beginning a sentence. Some writers prefer always to write *oh* with a capital.

EXAMPLES

1. Yesterday was my last bad day, but I remember the preceding bad days.

2. He played a prominent part in Congress during the last, bad days of the period of Reconstruction.

3. Cultivation is a fitting object to be attained by education, particularly in a country, like ours, of busy, practical people.

4. For this stream of apt illustrations Macaulay was indebted to his extraordinary memory, and his rapid eye for contrasts and analogies.

5. The so-called revolutions of Holland, England, and America, are all links of one chain.

6. A man who is sensitive, quick in his responses, loyal to his convictions, and strong in his feelings, is capable of a kind of public service that the phlegmatic, unresponsive, insensitive sort of man cannot render.

7. Much of this work was written, and some of it was printed, years ago.

8. We call a thing a blessing because it happens to fit our desires, or, at least, our ideas of what a blessing ought to be.

9. Many suns may set, and many dark nights may cover the earth with clouds, before the truth is ripened into fruitage.

10. These, and a hundred others which will occur to everyone, are marked instances of adaptation to environment.

11. His first problem is the growth of great fortunes, and the collocation of wealth and poverty in large cities.

12. They laud the commission's report, and exult in its conclusions as the final vindication of their own motives and methods.

13. We have learned, or ought to have learned by this time, that the use of a mark of punctuation often depends wholly upon the sense of the language, and not upon grammatical construction.

14. Untrammeled physical motions may here perfectly express the feelings that elsewhere have to stay unexpressed, or be, at best, imperfectly expressed by a trammeled tongue.

15. A tiny owl with a queer little voice called continually, not only after nightfall, but in the bright afternoon.

16. His speech was noteworthy, not for its eloquence, but because of the effect it produced upon the public.

17. The secret of life is, not to do what one likes, but to try to like that which one has to do; and one does come to like it in time.

18. Mortality; the insane, feeble-minded, deaf and dumb, and blind; crime, pauperism, and benevo-

lence; education; churches; foreign-born population; and manufacturers, are the subjects of his report.

19. Elijah is not the only one who has heard in the wilderness a still, small voice.

20. A holy war—oh, the irony of the appellation!—means the legitimatizing of slaughter, rapine, and plunder.

CHAPTER X

CONVENTIONAL USES OF MARKS

MANY uses of marks seem to be based solely upon convention, or arbitrary custom. Back of this convention there may be, in many cases, reason for the punctuation; but, more frequently, there seems to be no reason.

It is not always worth while carefully to attempt to distinguish between reason and convention; but it is quite important to know what is the best, or, at least, what is good, conventional usage, and to follow it in one's writing. We think it reasonable to call *good* only such conventional punctuation as is found in the work of writers, and of expert editors of copy, who use marks with a fair degree of consistency, and do not often violate the fundamental principles of punctuation already discussed herein. The punctuation found in most weekly and monthly periodicals is very poor, and is often inferior to that of daily newspapers. In a very few magazines (it would be difficult to name a half dozen, either American or European), and in a considerable number of daily newspapers, the use of marks is discriminating and helpful; in most of our periodical literature the use of marks is so distractive as to make the presence of any mark other than the end-marks of doubtful value, at least to readers not familiar with the meanings of most of the marks of punctuation.

THE PERIOD

1. A period or any other mark, except an interrogation-point, is not often used after a display line in the title-page of a book. This practice is well-nigh universal in book-work, and almost equally so in magazines.

2. A period is generally placed after the letter or the number indicating a division in enumerations. Periods are so used after the figures 1 and 2 numbering this and the preceding paragraph.

If the divisions have subdivisions, and the subdivisions are further subdivided, it is helpful to the reader if a good conventional style is followed. In case of four divisions and subdivisions, a good conventional style is as follows:

The capital letters (A, B, C, etc.) mark the main divisions of the subject.

The Roman capital numerals (I, II, III, IV, etc.) mark the subdivision of A, B, C, etc.

The Arabic figures (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) mark the subdivision of I, II, III, etc.

The small or lower-case letters (a, b, c, etc.) mark the subdivision of 1, 2, 3, etc. The italic letters are generally used.

If there is only a single enumeration, the Arabic figures (1, 2, 3, etc.) are used.

If there are one enumeration and one subdivision, the Arabic figures and the lower-case letters are used.

If one or more of the first divisions are subdivided, and one or more of such subdivisions are subdivided, the Roman numerals, the Arabic figures, and the lower-case letters are used.

The enumerating letters (A, B, etc.) of the first, or main, divisions are indented the space of the usual paragraph; the subdivisions of the first divisions are so far indented that their enumerating letters or figures are in alignment with the first letter of the first word under the division above. This mode of indention is continued with the next subdivisions, thus putting the enumerating letters or figures of the respective divisions or subdivisions in perpendicular alignment. This mode of enumeration and indention can be illustrated diagrammatically:

89.

A. The capital letters (A, B, C, etc.) will mark the main divisions of the subject.

I. The Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.) will mark the subdivisions of A, B, C, etc.

1. The Arabic figures (1, 2, 3, etc.) will mark the subdivisions of I, II, III, etc.

***a*. The italic lower-case letters (*a*; *b*, *c*, etc.) will mark the subdivisions of 1, 2, 3, etc.**

B. Here follows the second main division, its enumerating letter (B) being in perpendicular alignment with "A," above.

This mode of indention and alignment is not observed unless the divisions and subdivisions are somewhat close together; for, otherwise, the alignment of the enumerating letters or figures would not be apparent to the eye. It is particularly useful in the preparation of a syllabus.

An extra indention of the second and following lines of each subdivision helps to make clear the alignment of the enumerating letters and figures.

This is particularly desirable in type-written manuscript. In book-work the lines are often too short to permit so great indention, and therefore the letters and figures are indented the usual paragraph space.

A half-parenthesis is sometimes used with *a*, *b*, *c*, etc., as the half-bracket is used in dramatic composition. This is the German style. We do not know what is gained by it, unless it is used for an additional subdivision.

Some punctuators enclose in parentheses figures and lower-case letters when used before paragraph-enumerations. Generally, such usage is condemned by the meanings of the marks, and serves no useful purpose. Marks of parenthesis are properly used to enclose figures and letters enumerating particulars within the limits of a sentence or a paragraph. If one or more of the particulars are composed of two or more sentences, each of the particulars should be put in paragraph form, in order clearly to group the parts of each particular.

NOTE.—It is hardly proper to designate as a paragraph that which is a part of a sentence; and we therefore use the term "paragraph form" to designate a group of words that is a part of a sentence, and is yet put in the form of a paragraph, and is numbered as a particular.

As a rule, each enumerating group in paragraph form is composed of one or more sentences; and thus each enumerating figure or letter becomes a part of a paragraph group, and therefore loses its parenthetical nature. If each paragraph group is composed of a single group of words constituting only a phrase or a sentence, it may be followed conventionally by a semicolon, and thus give apparent justification for the

use of parentheses enclosing the enumerating figures or letters. The following example will illustrate the point:

90. There are three objections to buying very cheap editions of standard uncopyrighted books:
(1) The text is almost always inaccurate;
(2) The punctuation is so poor that, often, the meaning of the language is entirely changed;
(3) The printing is generally so poor as to injure the eyes of the reader.

To divide paragraph groups by semicolons is so obviously inconsistent that little justification can be found for this form of writing. If it is desirable, for the sake of the ease of reading thereby gained, to paragraph the particulars, as in the above sentence, the parentheses and semicolons should not be used:

90–1. There are three objections to buying very cheap editions of standard uncopyrighted books:
1. The text is almost always inaccurate.
2. The punctuation is so poor that, often, the meaning of the language is entirely changed.
3. The printing is generally so poor as to injure the eyes of the reader.

The De Vinne Press does not use a period after the letters and figures noting paragraph enumerations. This is not very common usage; but it is followed in the Bible and in practically all hymn-books, no period following the verse-numbers. As it makes a better-looking page, the style should be adopted. It is not adopted herein, except on pages xi and xii, for we prefer not to follow a limited conventional usage.

3. A period and a dash are generally used after a side-head. The dash sets the group of words off

from what follows, and thus shows at a glance that the words are a heading, and not a part of the sentence following. This style is very common, and is helpful to the reader. Side-heads are generally put in italics, but often in small capitals or bold-face type.

The same marks are put after the word "Note" (the word is generally printed with a capital and small capitals) when used to introduce remarks (a note) in the text.

4. The period and dash are used before the name of the author or the title of the work following a quotation when the name of the author or the work begins on the last line. If such name is dropped below the last line of type, the dash alone is used before the name.

5. The period is used to indicate abbreviations. (See Chapter XIII.)

6. The period is used by some printing-offices, notably The Riverside Press, between the figures expressing the time of day:

91. The train arrives at 6.20 P. M.

As this makes the "20" look like a decimal, the style is not to be commended.

7. The period is used to indicate decimals.

NOTE.—Quite contrary to the statement made in not a few school text-books, a cipher standing alone frequently precedes the decimal point, and is useful when it will prevent an error that is especially to be guarded against,—for example, in a physician's prescription. It is easy to read ".1 gm." as *one* gram; but "0.1 gm." is quite unmistakable, even with a faint mark for the decimal sign (period), because the spacing between the figures serves to show that a period belongs there.

THE COLON

The conventional uses of the colon are not numerous. The following are the principal ones:

1. Between figures expressing the time of day in hours and minutes; but, as stated above, the period is used by some good printing-houses:

92. The train arrives at 6:20 P. M.

2. Between the name of a publisher and the place of publication, especially in title-pages and in book titles:

93. New York: The Macmillan Company.

3. After the salutatory phrase at the beginning of a letter, if not on the first line of the letter:

94. Dear Sir:
Your letter of the 21st ultimo is at hand.

When the salutatory phrase is put on the first line of the text of the letter, a comma and a dash is the usual punctuation:

94–1. Dear Mr. Smith,—Your letter of the 25th ultimo is at hand.

4. After the salutatory phrase used by a speaker in addressing the chairman or the audience.

5. Many good punctuators use a dash with a colon when the colon is at the end of a paragraph. As the salutatory phrase in No. 94 is a paragraph, a dash would follow the colon. This is the style of The Riverside Press. We followed it in the first edition of this work. The combination is not pleasing to the eye, and therefore we do not now use the two marks together.

6. It cannot be denied that the use of the colon

after different forms of the verb "to be," and preceding details, is good *conventional* punctuation. We think it exceedingly bad punctuation; for it separates words (the verb and its predicate) that are in the closest grammatical relation, and, generally, the mark is without apparent purpose.

Our illustrative sentence is from the work of Mr. Teall, who explains that the colon is used because of the modifiers following the name of the persons:

95. Among those present were: John Brown, who made a speech; Adam Smith, with his wife and daughter; Charles Jones, etc.

We think no mark is needed after "were." As indicated elsewhere, if the particulars are put into paragraph form, thus leaving "were" at the end of an incomplete line, a dash may be used, simply to act as a sort of leader for the eye, or as a partial filler of the blank space in the line:

95–1. Among those present were—
John Brown, who made a speech . . .

Some good punctuators would use no mark after "were" in No. 95–1.

In No. 95 we give Mr. Teall's punctuation, which shows a comma before "etc." This makes "etc." stand for a modifier of "Jones"; and this, in turn, puts three words, with their modifiers, in a series without a conjunction before the last one. Such grouping is not in the usual form of grouping, except in language where, as we believe, the proper relations are overlooked, as they seem to be here.

This apparently doubtful meaning of the comma,—

that is, whether it indicates that "etc." stands for a modifier, like the preceding ones, or for additional persons,—may be avoided by using "and" after the second semicolon, thus making "etc." stand for a modifier of Jones, or by the use of a semicolon after "Jones," thus making "etc." stand for an additional group or groups.

In such sentences as No. 95, Mr. Wilson and other writers on punctuation suggest the use of a comma before the beginning of the semicolon-divided group. This punctuation might be based upon the use of a comma at the end of a long subject. The use of the colon is based, of course, on the ground that some introductory word like *namely* is understood.

THE SEMICOLON

We believe there are only two purely conventional uses of the semicolon:

1. As stated on a preceding page, a book title with a subtitle introduced by "or," takes a semicolon before "or" and a comma after it:

96. Why We Punctuate; or, Reason versus Rule in the Use of Marks.

2. Before an example or the specifications of particulars. We will give Mr. Wilson's rule for their use. He says:

97. A semicolon is put before *as, viz., to wit, namely, i. e.*, or *that is*, when they precede an example or a specification of particulars . . .

NOTE.—The punctuation in the above sentence has a striking peculiarity, which may readily deceive even a very careful reader. The use of "or" apparently makes *one* of the particulars enumerated the antecedent of "they," thus requiring the singular pronoun "it," instead of "they," in the clause that follows.

As Mr. Wilson would neither make nor overlook such a simple error in grammatical construction, we must look more closely for a meaning of the language that will justify the use of "they." Such meaning is found in the relation between "*i. e.*" and "*that is.*" As "*i. e.*" (*id est*) is the Latin abbreviation for "*that is,*" the *or* relation exists between only these particulars in the list. The comma before "or" follows the punctuation exemplified in Sentence 17. This meaning of the language ends the series with "*i. e.*"; and the relation between the items of the series is the *and* relation, which requires the plural pronoun "they."

The use of the conjunction "and" after "namely" would correct the fault; but the meaning of the sentence might not be easily apprehended by all readers.

These relations can best be revealed by recasting the language. It may be done thus:

97–1. A semicolon is put before *as, viz., to wit, namely,* and *i. e.,* or its English unabbreviated equivalent, *that is,* when they . . .

If we attempt to remedy the fault by putting "*that is*" in parentheses after "*i. e.,*" we take "*that is*" out of the list of words enumerated, making it simply an explanation of "*i. e.*"

A confusion in grouping, and consequently in meaning, due to the absence of the proper conjunction or the proper mark of punctuation at the end of a series, is very common.

This use of the semicolon and a comma is without reason, so far as we can determine; but it is very firmly fixed conventionally. The objection to it is, that it makes the semicolon a mark of apposition, along with the colon, the comma, and the comma and dash; and its use for such purpose detracts from its more common use of grouping when the *and* or *or* relation exists, whether expressed or understood, as exemplified in Sentences 7 and 20–1.

Mr. De Vinne uses a comma before such an introductory particle, and a colon after it; but he makes no reference to the established usage, nor does he give any reason for such punctuation. The reason is simple: the particle is slightly parenthetical, thus

requiring to be set off by commas; but the relation between what precedes and what follows is clearly the *colon* relation. When particulars are formally enumerated, this relation requires a colon on one side of the particle; and the colon will supersede one of the commas. On which side of the particle does the colon belong?

Although Mr. De Vinne, in his own work, puts the colon *after* the particle, the Century Dictionary, which is issued from the De Vinne Press, puts it *before* the particle when introducing illustrative examples. The position of the colon in either place is easily explained: if after the particle, the particle is more closely connected with the general term than with the particulars, which follow the colon; if before the particle, the particle is more closely connected with the particulars.

These relations will appear more clearly in examples:

98. The student failed in three studies, namely: spelling, grammar, and history.

98–1. The student failed in three studies: namely, spelling, grammar, and history.

If we substitute "by name" for "namely," the sense relation between "namely" and "studies," in one sentence, and between "namely" and the items following in the other sentence, is unmistakable. We can therefore put any such particle where it seems best to reveal the meaning.

We think "by name" is closely associated with "studies," just as the word "named" or "called" would be, if used in the place of "by name." This relation therefore requires the colon after the particle.

THE INTERROGATION-POINT

The mark of interrogation has three uses:

1. It is used after a word or group of words asking a question, whether or not such word or words indicate by their form that a question is asked. This usage has already been illustrated. (Page 2.)

2. Enclosed in the proper marks (parentheses, if in the writer's own language; brackets, if in quoted language), it is placed at a point in a sentence to indicate that the writer questions the accuracy of what immediately precedes it.

This use of the mark of interrogation is not in good taste unless it is for a serious, and not a frivolous, purpose. A foot-note is, in most cases, a better means of expression:

99. He said he was born in 1840(?).

100. He was asked for an exact statement of his age. He replied: "I was born in 1840[?]."

3. It is used by an editor in the margin of a manuscript, or by a proof-reader in the margin of a proof, to question the accuracy of a statement or the correctness of the form of language at the point indicated by the editor or proof-reader. When thus used it is not necessarily enclosed in other marks.

THE EXCLAMATION-POINT

This point is used in two ways:

1. It is used after a word or group of words to express command, surprise, or emotion.

2. Enclosed in brackets, it is used in a quotation to express surprise, irony, or contempt.

101. Wake up! Something is going wrong!

102. Oh, how hard my lot[!]

The practice of using two or three exclamation-points together is not now followed.

ELLIPSIS

When one, for the sake of brevity or otherwise, omits a word, a group of words, or one or more sentences from a quotation, such omission, or *ellipsis*, is indicated by either periods or stars. Periods are generally preferred on the ground that they look better on the printed page than stars. Unfortunately, the number of periods used for an ellipsis is not definitely fixed by convention. Some writers and printers use three, and others use four; we prefer three.

If words are omitted from the end of a sentence, the end-mark of the sentence, if an exclamation-point or an interrogation-point, is retained, and follows the three periods. If the end-mark of the sentence is a period, and one or more sentences following are omitted, there will be four periods at this point. There will be the same number if words are omitted from the beginning of a sentence following a sentence ending with a period.

If stars are used, the closing period is retained.

If one or more paragraphs, or if, in poetry, one or more lines, are omitted, a full line of periods or stars is used.

A dash or stars are used in the place of letters omitted from a word, and the dash in place of figures omitted from a number of figures. Stars were formerly much used for omitted letters.

Examples will illustrate the punctuation under con-

sideration. Our first example is taken from the current issue of a well-known weekly periodical:

103. Who commissioned them, a minority, a less than minority . . . ? . . . Some of them are misguided, some of them are blind, most of them are ignorant. I would rather pray for them. . . . They do not tell me what they are attempting.

How shall we interpret the marks indicating the three ellipses in the above sentence?

The first three periods stand for words omitted from the end of an interrogative sentence, whose end-mark follows such periods.

The second group of three periods indicates an ellipsis of one or more entire sentences. If they indicated an ellipsis of only a part of the next sentence, "Some" would not begin with a capital.

The next group of four periods is composed of three periods for the ellipsis and one period for the end-mark of the sentence.

It should be noted that ellipses from quotations are of only such matter as can be omitted without affecting the sense of the language quoted.

Marks of quotation will include the marks of ellipsis that begin or end the quoted matter.

The use of stars in the first part of No. 103 will convey no more definite information than the periods give the reader; but their use in the second part of the sentence, accompanied by a period, will at once show that they stand for the ellipsis of one or more sentences:

103–1. I would rather pray for them. * * * They do not tell me what they are attempting.

CHAPTER XI

QUOTATION-MARKS

QUOTATION-MARKS are either single or double. The former consist of one inverted comma and one apostrophe; the latter, of two inverted commas and two apostrophes.

The double marks are very generally used in this country for a single quotation; but some writers and some printing-offices follow the English style of using the single marks.

Quotation-marks are used by a writer to identify as the exact language of another writer a word or group of words which the first writer uses within his own language.

They are sometimes used by a writer to enclose a quotation from his own printed or spoken language. The fact that such quoted matter is his own language is practically always shown by the text.

If the quoted language contains a quotation, such quotation is identified by the quotation-marks (single or double) not used for the main quotation.

If the subordinate quotation begins the main quotation, three marks (one double and one single) are used at the beginning; if the subordinate ends the main, three marks are also used at the close.

Illustrations of the three uses above defined are found in the following examples:

104. In appreciation of Mrs. George Ripley, Mr. Frothingham says, "Theodore Parker made the following

entry in his journal: 'Mrs. Ripley gave me a tacit rebuke for not shrieking at wrongs, and spoke of the danger of losing our humanity in abstractions.'"

If a quotation consists of two or more paragraphs appearing *consecutively* in the work quoted from, quotation-marks are used only at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last one. If two or more paragraphs are printed consecutively in the quotation, but do not appear consecutively in the work quoted from, each paragraph is identified as a whole by marks at its beginning and end.

If only a part of a sentence or of a paragraph is quoted, and it is desirable to show this fact, the omitted part or parts are indicated by periods or stars. If such marks of omission come at the beginning or at the end of the quoted matter, the marks of quotation are so placed as to include them.

If the quoted matter is a letter or document with place- and date-lines preceding it, and with a complimentary closing-line and one or more signatures following it, each of such lines and names is treated as a paragraph, and takes its proper marks before or after it, or both.

It is much better practice in printing to put such matter in smaller type than the type of the main text; or, if in type-written manuscript, to identify it by less space between its lines than is used between the lines preceding and following it, or by indenting the lines of the quotation more than the regular paragraph indention. Quotations thus identified need no quotation-marks.

It was formerly the practice to put quotation-

marks at the beginning of every line of a quotation however long; and occasionally this style is now followed, especially in legal documents.

The practice in many newspaper offices furnishes, we think, a satisfactory solution of the problem. When quoted matter is given close grammatical relation to the text, the marks of quotation are used before the first word of the quotation and before each line, with the proper closing marks at the end of the quotation. Such a quotation should not exceed ten or twelve lines in length. Larger quotations should be put in smaller type, and without the marks. Even short ones may be so treated.

OTHER USES OF QUOTATION-MARKS

A word or group of words is sometimes enclosed in quotation-marks to give to such word or group of words a meaning somewhat different from its usual meaning. This use of the marks has a very wide range; and it is difficult to define the full scope of it. Its significance will appear in illustrative examples:

105. A drop-folio is generally used on a page on which a chapter begins or on a page containing an illustration extending to its top.

105–1. A "drop-folio" is a page-number that is put at the bottom of the page.

In No. 105–1 "drop-folio" is singled out as an uncommon word, as if quoted; and this fact is shown by the marks. In No. 105 it is used as is any other word in the sentence.

106. He received "big wages," $1.00 a day.

In No. 106 we put "big wages" in quotation-marks to imply that some one has used this familiar expression in a boastful way without telling the whole truth, which is exposed in the small sum that follows.

107. She was very fond of "five-o'clocks."

In No. 107 the writer implies that the afternoon teas of society are frivolous things. This is perhaps a purely conventional use of the marks, without an underlying reason for the meaning thus given.

In the next sentence the writer groups, by means of the marks, certain words into a title, which are identified by quotation-marks. Italics would answer the same purpose; but the former marks are preferred:

108. This fundamental work might be called, "An Introduction to the Study of Literature"; or, "The Elements of Literature."

The above sentence is quoted from an educational magazine of high standing, printed by a Press that gives much attention to style. The use of the semicolon and comma in the sentence is the conventional style of punctuating compound book-titles, as illustrated in Sentence 96. But the quotation-marks show that this is not a compound title, but alternative titles. The real meaning would be more clearly expressed by the use of "either" after "called"; and this shows that the punctuation is wrong. Either the semicolon and the comma or the quotation-marks must be omitted. The meaning to be conveyed will determine which marks to omit.

If the semicolon and comma are not the proper marks here, how shall we determine what mark, if

any, should precede "or"? Simply by the degree of liability to error in making a wrong combination of words at this point. The quotation-marks before "or" close the first quotation, making a complete group of words; and the quotation-marks following "or" open a new group of words. As there is here no liability on the part of the reader to make a wrong grouping out of some words that precede and some that follow "or," a mark before "or" can serve no purpose. Each group is bound up in its own marks of quotation, and is a name; and the two names are alternatives. With this interpretation of the meaning of the language as determined by the quotation-marks alone, the sentence would be punctuated as follows:

108–1. This fundamental work might be called, "An Introduction to the Study of Literature" or "The Elements of Literature."

The use of the comma after "called" in the above sentence is purely conventional. It is somewhat like the use of the comma before "that" following "is," as treated elsewhere. Or, we may say, it is a purely rhetorical use, as the reading of the somewhat long title seems to require a pause after "called," in order to identify the group to follow. The omission of the comma could not be called poor punctuation.

Quotation-marks are used in the report of a conversation or dialogue in which the names of the speakers are not printed at the beginning of their respective remarks, as is done in the printing of a drama. However, some writers do not use quotation-marks for this purpose, and none are used in the frequent conversations in the Bible.

If the language of a quotation is broken off by a writer for the purpose of inserting words not a part of the quotation, each of the two parts into which the quoted matter is thus broken, is enclosed in quotation-marks:

109. "We shall start," he said, "at early dawn."

Words to which special attention is called, otherwise than for emphasis, are put in quotation-marks:

110. The words "virile," "psychological," "strenuous," etc., are useful words in their proper places, but weak words when out of place.

The titles of books, plays, songs, poems, and the like, when referred to in one's text, are put in quotation-marks by some writers and in italics by others. The former seems to be the more common usage. Mr. De Vinne says "italic is preferred by bookish men." Most writers make an exception to the above rule in the case of the titles of well-known books.

The same rule applies to periodicals, including transactions and proceedings issued, at least, quarterly. In most journal offices there is a well-established convention: the journal puts in italics the name of another periodical, and in caps and small caps its own name appearing in its own text.

When the closing marks of quotation follow a word or group of words that is also followed by another mark of punctuation, the positions of the two marks are determined by the relation such other mark of punctuation bears to the quoted matter. If it belongs to, and is therefore required by, the quoted matter, it goes within the quotation-marks. The

comma and the period always precede the final quotation-marks, and do so simply because they appear better thus arranged on the printed page. The semicolon, the colon, the interrogation-point, and the exclamation-point follow or precede the closing marks of quotation according to their relation to the quoted matter. The comma and period also precede marks of reference (superior figures, stars, etc.) and the degree mark, while the semicolon, colon, the interrogation-point, and the exclamation-point follow them. On page 3, above, a superior figure follows a colon. It does so because it refers to the colon, not to what preeedes the colon.

EXAMPLES

1. "Movies" showing war scenes that arouse the martial spirit are objectionable to all pacifists.

The above sentence contains two words treated as they are found today in practically all periodicals and books using them. The words *movies* and *pacifists* (also written *pacificists*) are newcomers in English, and are not found in any dictionary. Why is the former put in quotation-marks and the latter not? It is probably because all editors recognize "movies" as a word of doubtful propriety, and therefore give it the conventional marks. On the other hand, the word "pacifist," whose meaning is so apparent and whose form is so regular, has not been regarded as of doubtful propriety, generally recognized as a stranger, and so has been accepted without the introduction of the conventional marks of quotation.

3. Portrait of Major-General Henry Dearborn. By Gilbert Stuart.

4. "Our Boatman." By John La Farge.

The above legends (inscriptions) appear under two pictures in a well-edited current magazine. Why does the title in No. 4 take marks of quotation, while that in No. 3 does not?

Two reasons may be given for the use of the marks in No. 4, while one reason is sufficient for their absence in No. 3. "Our Boatman" is the title of the painting, and is treated as a quotation, and therefore requires the quotation-marks. Secondly, the words "Our Boatman" are not used in their literal sense as descriptive of a man who acts as our boatman,—that is, the picture is not a photograph of John Smith, our boatman, but is an idealization of a man of his class. To give the words other than a literal meaning, the marks are used.

In No. 3 the language is taken in its literal meaning, and even may be that of the editor of the magazine, thus requiring no marks. Probably no painter would put upon his canvas "A Portrait of John Smith."

5. "Justice," said Webster, "is the great interest of man on earth"; and Mr. Root laid it down as a rule, when Secretary of State, that we should not only observe justice in our relations, but that we should be just.

6. Professor John Finley, in "The French in the Heart of America," insists, with pardonable enthusiasm, that we got our finest democratic ideals from the French settlers in the Mississippi Valley, and that here was nourished

> a national democracy founded on the equalities, the freedoms, and the fraternities of the frontier so vital, so powerful, that it became the dominant nationalistic force in a continent-wide republic.

CHAPTER XII

BRACKETS AND PARENTHESES

THE principal use of brackets is to show that a bracketed word or group of words in a quotation is inserted by the writer using the quoted language, and not by the author of such language. Parentheses, on the other hand, are used by a writer, as we have already seen, to enclose a parenthetical word or group of words in his own language.

Some examples that furnish apparent exceptions to these general statements considered as rules, may serve to emphasize the principle of this punctuation.

The following examples (Nos. 112–115) are taken from the "Style Book" of the Government Printing-Office.

NOTE.—We follow in the examples the capitalization and punctuation of the original. For this reason we do not use a hyphen in writing the quoted title (Style Book), above.

These examples are given in this style-book for the guidance of type-setters in their work in the Government Printing-Office. They appear to be extracts from the *Congressional Record:*

112. Mr. SPEAKER. Is there any objection to the consideration of this bill at this time? [After a pause.] There is no objection.

113. Mr. SPEAKER (after a pause). If no gentleman claims the floor, the Clerk will proceed with the reading of the bill.

114. Mr. HEALD. The gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. SHERLEY] stated that he would support the measure.

115. Mr. HEALD. The gentleman from Kentucky, Col. SHERLEY, stated that he would support the measure.

In these examples the names of the persons speaking are so manifestly inserted by the reporter that they need no identification marks.

In No. 112 three words are inserted within the text by the reporter, and take brackets for identification as matter inserted in the language of another.

In No. 113 the same three words, manifestly inserted by the reporter, take parentheses. They do so because they clearly belong to what precedes, which is not a part of the text, but is the reporter's language. The use of brackets here would be bad punctuation. The parentheses are used because the words enclosed are purely *parenthetical* in their relation to the preceding word, which is the reporter's language.

In No. 114 the words "Mr. SHERLEY" are inserted by the reporter, and therefore take brackets. In No. 115 the words "Col. SHERLEY" are the language of Mr. Heald, and therefore take the usual punctuation (commas).

Another apparent exception to the above rule is found in the various modes of printing stage directions in dramatic composition. As such directions have no reference to the meaning of the language of the text, it is desirable, in printing them, to show this fact by their form. In the main, such directions are either centered lines shorter than the text, or are indented more than the usual space of the paragraph. They may be enclosed in brackets or parentheses, and be printed in either italic or Roman type, or in italics without the brackets or parentheses.

If a direction precedes, as it does sometimes, the speech to which it belongs, and is in the opening line of such speech, it necessarily is enclosed in brackets. If it follows and ends the last line of the speech, it takes a single bracket at the beginning of the direction. If it follows, and is put below, the last line, it takes a single bracket, or is printed in the style of the direction preceding the speech.

Thus we see that the variety of style in printing stage directions grows out of the fact that they are sometimes identified as stage directions by their location and the style of type (italic), and therefore do not necessarily require brackets for further identification.

We shall not take space to illustrate the above varieties of punctuation. Examples can readily be found in almost any library.

We have dwelt perhaps more at length upon this varied punctuation than its importance may seem to justify; but, it seems to us, we may see in it a principle underlying even conventional punctuation.

Our next sentence illustrates a very common use of brackets. In this sentence we make the first enclosure (*sic*), the second being that of the writer who made the quotation:

116. In one of John Smith's quaint letters to the Royal Council of Virginia, sitting in London, he says: "And I humbly entreat you hereafter, [*sic*] let us know what we [are to] receive, and not stand to the sailors' courtesy to leave us what they please."

When inserted in a quotation, the Latin word "*sic*," meaning *thus*, signifies that what immediately

precedes it is found in the original. By thus calling attention to it, the writer who makes the quotation implies that an error exists at this point. Our own insertion of "*sic*" is meant to say that the comma preceding it is in the original, and to question its correctness. The position of the comma makes "hereafter" qualify what precedes, as if it read, "I hereafter entreat you." The evident meaning is, "hereafter let us know."

The words "are to," enclosed in the next brackets, were inserted by the writer who quoted from John Smith's letter.

"Sic" is put in italics because this is the conventional way of writing most words from a foreign language. The words "are to," being a suggested part of the text, are put in the text letter. Words thus supplied by the translators of the Bible are put in italics, simply to show their character, as is explained in the preface or elsewhere. Brackets are not used in the Bible text.

Sometimes a line of poetry is too long for the type-measure in which the poem is set. If one or more words of such line are carried forward to make a new and very short line, the space between the full line above and the full line below such short line may be as wide as the space between two verses, and thus present a bad effect to the eye. To avoid this the extra word or words may be put in the line above, if the space permits, and at its end, with a single bracket at the left to cut it off from the preceding words in the same line.

It is a common practice in legal and commercial

work to enclose in parentheses Arabic figures corresponding to the preceding number expressed in words. This practice often gives rise to a mistake that, when pointed out, is plain enough to anyone:

117. Pay to John Smith or order twenty-five ($25.00) dollars.

The matter in the parentheses should be simply "25," to correspond with what precedes; or the sentence should be written thus:

117–1. Pay to John Smith or order twenty-five dollars ($25.00).

When a woman signs her name to a letter, especially a letter to a stranger, and wishes to give other information than the name conveys, or to indicate how she should be addressed in a reply to her letter, parentheses are used for the purpose:

118. MARY LOUISE BROWN.
(MRS. GEORGE H. BROWN.)

If she wishes simply to convey information as to whether she is a married or an unmarried woman, she uses the proper title, enclosed in parentheses, before her name:

119. (Miss) MARY LOUISE BROWN.
119–1. (Mrs.) MARY LOUISE BROWN.

In Sentences 99, 100, and 102 we saw a purely conventional use of parentheses and brackets for enclosing interrogation- and exclamation-points to express doubt and surprise, respectively.

PUNCTUATION WITHIN PARENTHESES OR BRACKETS

Matter within parentheses or brackets refers to what precedes these marks, which may be a mark of

punctuation, a single word, a group of words forming part of a sentence, an entire sentence, or two or more sentences.

We cannot show by the punctuation how much of the preceding matter is referred to; but a conventional treatment of the punctuation for this purpose is helpful, even though such treatment is not uniform.

The enclosed matter either falls between the parts of a sentence or follows a sentence. When within a sentence the enclosed matter does not begin with a capital letter, even though a full sentence, unless the first word is a proper noun; nor does it take a period at its end. If, however, the language is either interrogative or exclamatory, it takes the proper mark to show this; and such mark is placed within the parentheses or brackets.

When the enclosed matter follows a sentence, it may refer to a word or to a small group of words within such sentence, to all of the sentence, or to two or more preceding sentences. It is at this point that a conventional treatment of the subject may be helpful, the object of such treatment being to show, at a glance, how far the reference extends. If the enclosed matter refers to the last word of the sentence, or to a short group of words near the end, it receives the same treatment given it when wholly within the sentence. If such enclosed matter refers to a larger part of the sentence than above described, to the entire sentence, or to two or more preceding sentences, it is regarded as an independent sentence. As such it is separated from the preceding sentence by the space usually put between sentences; it begins with

a capital letter; and the proper end-mark is put within the parentheses, with no mark following outside.

We believe there is only one mark used within parentheses with reference to a mark outside. The English practice, which is followed by a number of high-class periodicals in this country, is as follows: if a comma is required where a parenthesis is to be inserted, a comma is placed before the first enclosing mark, and is repeated at the end of the language within the parentheses.

We prefer to use only one mark when required by the text without reference to the parenthesis, and to put it after the parentheses, thus more clearly confining the parenthesis to what precedes.

Our illustrative examples will show these points more clearly.

EXAMPLES

1. The Senator [Davis] may strongly condemn the measure, but I shall vote for it. [Applause.]

As the above example is quoted matter, the two interpolated words take brackets.

2. [a—b—(c—d)].

In the above algebraic expression brackets and parentheses are used conventionally to group the letters (algebraic symbols) which they respectively enclose.

3. PEER

[To himself]

Indeed an exceedingly gifted man;
Almost all he says is beyond comprehension.
[Looks around.

4. Let every one of us please *his* neighbor for his good to edification.—Romans xv, 2.

5. "Yours of the 14th has just arrived, and I hasten to reply to it.

"Here is a list of the six best novels in the English language:

"Tom Jones. (Fielding.)
"Tristam Shandy. (Sterne.)
"David Copperfield. (Dickens.)
"Henry Esmond. (Thackeray.)
"The Cloister and the Hearth. (Reade.)
"The Egoist. (Meredith.)

"I don't know whether 'Tristam Shandy' can strictly be called a novel. If the rules of your game cut it out, then I would replace it by

"Kenilworth, (Scott,)

to my mind the most perfect of Scott's novels."

While we have not used quotation-marks with our illustrative sentences and examples, practically all of which are quoted, we do so with the above examples, in order to exhibit their use.

The punctuation of this example illustrates the following points:

1. The use of marks of quotation at the beginning of every paragraph, or group of words put in paragraph form, with like closing marks after the last line, informs the reader that the paragraphs quoted appear consecutively in the original.

2. The titles of the books named, with one exception, are not enclosed in marks of quotation in the original. If they were so enclosed, each title in our example would be enclosed in single marks of quotation, in addition to the double marks at the beginning.

3. The name of each novel (Tom Jones, etc.) is treated as a complete sentence, and so takes a period after it. The matter following each sentence (name of a novel) refers to the entire sentence, thus requiring a period within the marks of parenthesis enclosing the name of the author.

4. The treatment of the last-named title (Kenilworth) is somewhat unusual. It is put in paragraph form, probably to conform to the paragraph form above; but it lacks the usual introduction of particulars that calls for the paragraph form.

The commas before and within the parentheses follow the English style. As a comma is required between "Kenilworth"

and the explanatory group of words following the parenthesis, we should use only one, putting it after the marks of parenthesis.

Those who adopt the English style apparently always use the commas when the matter within parentheses or brackets falls within the sentence, even though the relation between what follows and what precedes the parentheses or brackets does not require a comma. We consider such punctuation bad, for it appears to treat the matter so enclosed as both *slightly* and *wholly* parenthetical. Our next example (No. 6), a quotation, illustrates this point.

5. We do not know why "Tristam Shandy" takes marks of quotation (single marks in the example), while the names of the other books take none.

6. I permitted myself, [he said,] the prophecy that their prejudices were destined to vanish.

While we use a comma, as in the paragraph (No. 5) preceding Example 6, after parentheses or brackets when required by the language outside of the parentheses or brackets, and use no comma unless so required, we think the English practice poor punctuation. This conventional use of two commas ignores the sense relation between the groups of words preceding and following the parentheses or brackets, which sense relation may be determined by the presence or the absence of a comma.

CHAPTER XIII

ABBREVIATIONS AND MISCELLANY

WE shall not attempt to treat the subject of abbreviations exhaustively or even fully, for it goes beyond the subject of punctuation; but its importance seems to justify its consideration at some length.

In the best printing-offices, if their expert copy-readers prepare the manuscript, few abbreviations are permitted in book-work; and it is well to follow their rules in all formal, if not in all business, correspondence.

FORM OF ADDRESS

The abbreviations in forms of address accepted by the printing-offices issuing three works on punctuation and style, especially mentioned in our preface, are the following:

By the De Vinne Press, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Messrs.*, *Jr.*, and *Sr.*

By the University of Chicago Press, *Mr.*, *Messrs.*, *Mrs.* (French, *M.*, *MM.*, *Mme*, *Mlle*), *Dr.*, *Rev.*, *Hon.*, *St.* [Saint], and *Esq.*

By The Riverside Press, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Messrs.*, *M.*, *Mme.*, *Mlle.*, *Jr.*, *Sr.*, *Dr.*, *Esq.*, *Rev.*, *Hon.*

These lists are somewhat misleading. Although not uniform, it is probable that the practice of the three offices from which they come, is uniform, with one exception. In the list from the "Manual for

Writers" (University of Chicago Press), *Mme* and *Mlle* are not written with periods, as, we think, they should be.

It is a matter of course that the plural form *MM.*, given in only one list, and the plural forms *Mmes.* and *Mlles.*, not given at all, are treated the same as the abbreviations of the singular forms of the same.

NOTE.—We are unable to interpret the parenthesis in the above list from the University of Chicago Press. The terms within the parentheses are only remotely, if at all, explanatory of the preceding terms; and, although they belong in the list of abbreviations, they are taken out of the list by being put in parentheses. Moreover, "Mlle," which is within the parentheses, has no reference to any term outside of the marks.

While the above and other points in abbreviations discussed herein, are closely to be observed in the text of a book and in formal correspondence, abbreviations of technical terms, in tabulated work, in foot-notes, indexes, etc., are used freely.

FIRM OR CORPORATION NAMES

In business correspondence courtesy requires that abbreviations adopted in a firm or a corporation name be carefully observed by others, regardless of the in elegance of such forms.

Bro., *Bros.*, and *Co.* are used in firm names following &, but not otherwise. They should always be spelled out when preceded by a proper adjective.

John Smith & Bro.; Brown, Smith & Co., and like forms are used.

In *Smith Brothers, Smith Company*, and like forms the final word is not abbreviated.

While the "short and" (&) is commonly used in firm names, "and" is frequently seen:

Armour and Company.

It is very rare that a comma is used before the final "and" or "&" in firm names of three or more words constituting a series. If a firm prefers so to punctuate its name, others who write the name should not insert a comma.

FIGURES

As there are few fixed conventional uses for figures, we shall give simply our preferences.

In ordinary reading matter, spell out all round numbers, and numbers of one or two digits, unless of a technical character. When several numbers occur close together, and are to be compared, they may be expressed in figures:

120. Admission, one dollar.

120–1. Admission, fifty cents.

120–2. Admission: Men, $2; women, $1.50; children, 50 cents.

In No. 120–2 we use "50," instead of "fifty," because figures are used to express other numbers in the sentence.

TIME OF DAY

The time of day is generally spelled out in ordinary reading matter:

121. We shall start at four o'clock this afternoon.

But with A. M. and P. M. (these abbreviations are best set in small capitals) figures are always used:

121–1. We shall start at 4 P. M.

TEMPERATURE, ETC.

Figures are used to express temperature, specific gravity, and like technical matter.

122. The specific gravity of gold is 19.27. Its melting-point is 1947° F. (1064° C.)

The letters "th," "st," and "d" ("d" is preferable to "nd" or "rd") should not be used with the number expressing the day of the month, except when preceding the name of the month:

123. We left on July 9, 1915.
123–1. We left on July 9.
123–2. We left on the 9th of July.

Many good writers would use "th" in No. 123–1, probably because it expresses the usual oral form of the date.

In printing consecutive numbers, like dates, numbers of pages, etc., certain omissions may be indicated by the dash; but the exact meaning of this and another mode of writing these numbers should be understood. Examples will illustrate this:

124. He was in England in 1914–15.
124–1. He spent the winter of 1914–15 in England.
125. Further information will be found on pages 25–27.
125–1. Further information will be found on pages 25, 26, 27.
125–2. Further information will be found elsewhere (pp. 25, 26) in this work.
125–3. Further information will be found on pages 25 to 40.

No. 124, strictly interpreted, means *all* of the two years indicated; but it may be an indefinite portion of the last of 1914 and a like portion of the first of 1915. In No. 124–1 the latter meaning is specifically given by the word *winter*.

No. 125 means that the subject is treated con-

tinuously on the pages mentioned; but it may not occupy *all* of pages 25 and 27.

No. 125–1 means that the subject is referred to on each of the pages numbered, but not to the exclusion of other matter.

In No. 125–2, in order to save space, the comma takes the place of "and" between two numbers, just as the dash takes the place of "to" between "25" and "27" in No. 125. Such omission of "and" is found in the text only when the figures are enclosed in parentheses; but it is common without the parentheses in foot-notes, tables, and indexes.

In No. 125–3 we use "to" instead of a dash. "To" is generally used when a considerable number of pages is named. No definite rule can be given for such usage.

An apparent exception to the interpretation of the numbers in No. 125 is not infrequently found in the manner of writing the street numbers of a building, especially as found on letter-heads:

126. John Smith & Co.
25-27 Water Street
Chicago

As buildings on one side of a street take the odd numbers, and on the other side the even numbers, we know that John Smith & Co. are located at 25 *and* 27 Water Street.

An accepted form of shortening an address which contains the words *street* and *avenue* is to write "avenue" first with its number expressed in words, followed by the street with its number in figures:

127. He resides at the corner of Tenth Avenue and 52d Street.

If a house number precedes the spelled-out name of the street, the former takes figures, in order readily to distinguish it from the name of the street:

127–1. He resides at 34 Tenth Avenue South.

If it is desirable to begin a sentence with a number, such number should be spelled out, and not expressed in figures:

128. Two thousand people met in the park.

BIBLE REFERENCES

As the forms of Bible references are very numerous we shall give only two, which, we think, represent the best modern usage:

129. Matt. iv, 4; 1 Cor. i, 29.
130. Gen. 2:3-6, 9; 3:17.

As the Roman numerals were formerly, and still are to some extent, followed by a period, this usage would give the following in the place of No. 129:

129–1. Matt. iv. 4; 1 Cor. i. 29

We think No. 129 the better style.

FOOT-NOTES

The style in foot-notes is so varied that we shall consider only one or two points involved.

Superior figures in the text have taken the place almost altogether of the star, dagger, etc., both because they are less conspicuous and because they can be extended in number.

The lower-case superior italic letters are sometimes used instead of, or together with, superior figures, as in the Bible.

In ordinary work, the superior figures or letters

follow the word or group of words concerning which the reference is made. In the Bible the figures and letters precede such word or words.

The figures before the notes corresponding to the figures in the text are generally superior figures; but the ordinary figures are sometimes used, because, as each number begins a paragraph, the superior figures are too small to look well.

The punctuation of foot-notes, and other details of their composition, are treated differently by different writers. A single illustration will serve to show a well-recognized style of composing such notes:

130. [5]Morris Schaff, "The Battle of the Wilderness," *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1909.

130–1. [5]Morris Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, Vol. ii, p. 204.

No. 130 specifies foot-note No. 5, and refers to an article in a magazine, which is named.

No. 130–1 refers to a book, the volume and page being indicated.

These foot-notes often appear in the following form:

130–2. 5. Schaff, Morris: The Battle of the Wilderness.

Foot-notes are often extensively used in scientific periodicals and books; and the larger establishments that print such matter usually have their style-cards, which should be followed by authors submitting manuscripts to such establishments.

The lower-case italic letters, "*a*," "*b*," and "*c*," and sometimes the superior letters, are used to indicate the first, second, and third parts of a verse, para-

graph, or page referred to by an accompanying figure. For instance, Romans vi, 5a means the first part of verse 5 of Romans vi.

STAR, DAGGER, ETC.

Because of the clumsy appearance of these marks, and because of the inconvenience they cause in the mechanical make-up of printed matter, they are used sparingly; but they are quite indispensable in tabulated matter, scientific works, etc.

If several of these marks are required on a page, they follow the following order: star, dagger, double dagger, section, parallel lines, paragraph.

MISCELLANEOUS

The word *cent* in *per cent* is now generally written without a period.

Etc. is preferable to *&c.* when used for "and others" or "and so on"; but not a few good writers use the latter for this purpose.

The terms *4to*, *8vo*, *12mo*, etc., used to denote the sizes of books, are not abbreviations, and so do not take periods after them. Each number stands for a suppressed part of the word in which it appears.

The abbreviations *i. e.*, *e. g.*, *vs.*, *viz.*, etc., are often printed in italics. The words for which they stand are generally preferred to the abbreviations.

THE APOSTROPHE

There are but few uses of the apostrophe, and they are well settled, as follows:

1. To indicate the omission of letters or figures

in contractions: *ne'er*, *don't*, *it's* (it is), *'t* will, class of *'83*, the gold-seekers of *'49*, etc.

2. To indicate the possessive case of nouns, but not of pronouns: *Henry's*, *man's*, *Jones's*, a *boy's* task, the *boys'* play-ground, for *conscience'* sake, etc.

3. To indicate, with *s*, the plurals of letters, figures, symbols, and certain unusual or peculiar names: *i's* and *t's*, *6's* and *7's*, four *t's*, several *D.D.'s*, the *stay-at-home's*, etc.

WHEREAS—RESOLVED

In the absence of a better place to note the conventional form of printing and punctuating the above words and what follows them, we consider the subject here. Two illustrations are sufficient to show the best usage. We prefer the first style. The second is that of the Century Dictionary, and is good style:

130A. WHEREAS, Our neighbors have suffered great loss . . .

Resolved, That we give them immediate financial assistance . . .

130B. *Whereas*, Our neighbors have suffered great loss . . .

Resolved, that we give them immediate financial assistance . . .

If the words "therefore be it" are used, they are put at the end of the line preceding "Resolved," and set in Roman, with or without a dash following:

130C. WHEREAS, Our neighbors have suffered great loss; therefore be it

Resolved, That . . .

CHAPTER XIV

COMPOUND WORDS

WE add this chapter on compound words to a work on punctuation simply to record our high estimate of the value of the subject, and our protest against its complete neglect by high schools and colleges, as well as by very many good writers.

As in spelling, a few rules may be helpful; but, also as in spelling, only continuous reference to a dictionary or to a good list of compound words, will enable a writer to attain any degree of perfection in their use.

We believe there is only one fairly complete work on the subject, and that is by Mr. F. Horace Teall, who was a department editor of the Standard Dictionary, having in charge especially the matter of compound words. His work is entitled "English Compound Words and Phrases."

We shall discuss only two illustrative examples; and they are selected for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of the subject, and the value of common sense in the application of principles governing the determination of the form words take to express different meanings.

Our first example may seem to be a somewhat commonplace one, but it may be a helpful illustration. It has been submitted to a large number of suitable persons as a test of the general knowledge extant on the subject among printers, proof-readers, teachers,

and writers. The result revealed almost complete ignorance of the subject.

Which of the following forms is correct, and why?

131. (1) back bone, (2) back-bone, (3) backbone.

The three forms are correct, but each has a special meaning:

1. In the form "back bone," the word "back" stands in the position of an adjective, and is to be interpreted as we interpret any adjective standing before a noun. If we know the meaning of a word thus used, and the meaning of the word it precedes, we know the meaning of the two words. "Back" here designates one of two or more bones in a row, say, lying on a table.

2. In "back-bone" we have an illustration of a process of the growth of language. Professor W. D. Whitney, the distinguished philologist, says that the composition of words out of independent elements, is more important than any other process in the development of language. The stage of development may determine the word's form.

"Back-bone" means the bone of the back, or the spinal column. It is a type of a large class of hyphenated compounds which are merely elliptical inversions; in this case, the word is such an inversion of *bone of the back*.

3. "Backbone" is an example of words whose meanings are traceable, sometimes readily and sometimes with difficulty, to their parts. It is easy to understand that a man with a real "back-bone" has *grit*, which is one meaning of "backbone" written as a solid word.

NOTE.—Webster's New International Dictionary does not give the hyphenated form of these two words; notwithstanding this, we believe this form has the sanction of reason and of convention.

The principles involved in determining the above forms are very simple, and seem self-evident.

The process of language-development is rapidly going on; and, as every corrector of manuscript knows, incorrect forms of words are exceedingly numerous. Often they are made in attempts at short cuts in language. When they may not be changed by the corrector, the hyphen is often useful in revealing their meaning. The use of the hyphen must be based upon reason. Usually, the purpose is to tie together two words to form one adjective or one noun.

The words in our next two illustrative sentences were frequently seen some time ago when almost the entire press of the country was discussing a subject calling for the use of these words. The words were invariably printed improperly; and we shall print them so in the illustrative sentences:

132. Dr. Keene is the medical school inspector of Minneapolis.

133. Mr. Flexner is the medical school inspector of the Carnegie Foundation.

What is the meaning of the language of these sentences? To the careful reader "Dr." and "Mr." connote quite different things, and thus suggest different relations between the words "medical school inspector."

Let the hyphen answer the question:

132–1. Dr. Keene is the medical school-inspector of Minneapolis.

133-1. Mr. Flexner is the medical-school inspector of the Carnegie Foundation.

In other words, the sentences say that Dr. Keene does *medical* inspection of schools, and that Mr. Flexner simply inspects medical schools. As a matter of fact, Mr. Flexner investigated the adequacy of their methods and means of teaching.

Whether one uses a hyphen in "to-day" or "to-morrow," or writes "cannot" as one word or as two words (can not), is a matter of little importance; but no educated person should be ignorant of the meanings of words conveyed by the forms in which they are written.

The fundamental principles of compounding words, especially when the meaning of such words is involved, should be understood by pupils in our grade schools. This knowledge is easily acquired; and, once acquired, the pupil will soon form the habit of consulting the dictionary or a list of words to ascertain the present-day usage in compounding. The fundamental principles will tell him that all such combinations as "present-day" when used as adjectives take the hyphen.

A few examples will serve to show the beauty and value of compounding words upon the principles illustrated above.

EXAMPLES

1. More than once he was on the verge of breaking down; but he held, duty-true, to his task until he had spent his last ounce of strength in the service.

2. . . . Some take from the shelves
Of the volumes a-row
Those legends of goblins and elves
That we loved long ago.

3. Between flood- and ebb-tide there is a period of rest called slack-water.

4. The speeches were generally reported in *Handels- und Machtpolitick* (politics of trade and power).

In No. 3 "tide" is omitted from the first of two compound hyphenated words connected by a conjunction. In No. 4 the common ending (*politick*) is omitted from the first of two compound solid words, a hyphen taking its place.

We know of no author who deals with the somewhat inconsistent use of the hyphen in No. 4; but we believe such usage is to be recommended.

5. Truffles grow in calcareous soils, usually under birch- or oak-trees.

6. Mr. So-and-so asserted that the present-day practices are wrong.

7. The president of the society is a member of several committees ex officio; but the secretary is not an ex-officio member of any committee.

In No. 7 the first "ex officio" is formed of a preposition and a noun, and means *by virtue of office*. The second "ex-officio" is a compound adjective, as is "present-day" in No. 6.

Many writers prefer to put in italics all foreign expressions, such as "ex-officio."

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such groups of words; and a poor open punctuator does the same, but also improperly omits commas and semicolons in many other places.

One doing serious composition, or studying punctuation, may well punctuate closely as he writes, and afterwards remove all marks whose omission will improve the grouping and not violate good convention. The close punctuator who studiously omits a mark only when he has a reason to do so will rarely fail to use marks helpfully; the open punctuator who omits marks too freely will write much obscure language and much more whose meaning is not readily obtainable by the reader.

With this general principle established, the punctuator can readily determine what marks may be omitted; and, far more important, he can adapt to his own language the style of punctuation he prefers to follow.

The punctuation of our next sentence, taken from an editorial in a recent issue of the *New York Times*, has interest for both the close and the open punctuator. It contains *seven* commas, only one of which can safely be omitted, while two more are needed. The comma after "divisions" may be omitted, but its use is good punctuation. One is needed after "music," in order to show that "and" is followed by the closing word of a series; and one is imperative after "exhibition," to show that what follows is an *explanatory*, and not a *restrictive*, adjective modifier:

134. There are in this issue eight separate sections, including, besides the twelve pages of timely pictures, beautifully executed in roto-gravure and half-tone, and the ample news and editorial divisions, and those devoted

to sports, social affairs, music and the stage, a twenty-page section given up entirely to the development of the motor car in view of the yearly automobile exhibition which receives so large a share of public attention.

The punctuator who follows the fundamental principles we have endeavored to set forth, will be neither a *close* nor an *open* punctuator: he will be a judicious punctuator.

EXAMPLES

The following selections, copied from the first edition of this book, show the value of good punctuation, which, in this instance, is fairly close punctuation.

The first selection is an extract from Macaulay, picturing Burke's knowledge of India; the second is from an article by Mr. Rowland E. Robinson, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for December, 1895. The punctuation of the first is our own; the punctuation of the second is either the author's or the editor's.

A careful study of these selections, with a view to comparing at what points the punctuation is open and at what points close, cannot fail to be of interest. For instance, what is the meaning of the language in the first paragraph of the second extract (A New England Woodpile) with a comma after "certainty," and what would be the meaning without the comma? Wherein does the punctuation of this extract depart from the principles we have been discussing?

BURKE'S INDIA

India and its inhabitants were not to him, as to most Englishmen, mere names and abstractions, but a real country and a real people. The burning sun; the strange vegetation of the palm and the cocoa-tree; the rice-field and the tank; the huge trees, older than the Mogul Empire, under which the village crowds assemble; the thatched roof of the peasant's hut, and the rich tracery of the mosque, where the imaum prayed with his face to Mecca; the drums, and banners, and gaudy idols; the devotee swinging in the air; the graceful maiden, with the pitcher on her head,

descending the steps to the river-side; the black faces, the long beards, the yellow streaks of sect; the turbans and the flowing robes; the spears and the silver maces; the elephants with their canopies of state; the gorgeous palanquin of the prince, and the close litter of the noble lady—all those things were to him as the objects amidst which his own life had been passed—as the objects which lay on the road between Beaconsfield and St. James's Street.

The value of punctuation will appear in comparing this passage, as above printed, with the same passage as it appears in a work on composition edited by a university professor:

. . . the rice-field; the tank; . . . the thatched roof of the peasant's hut; the rich tracery of the mosque where the imaum prays with his face to Mecca; . . . the graceful maiden, with the pitcher on her head descending the steps to the river-side; the black faces; the long beards; the yellow streaks of sect; the turbans and the flowing robes, the spears and the silver maces; . . .

By such punctuation the *tank* is taken out of the *rice-field;* the contrast between *hut* and *mosque* is lost; the absence of the comma before "where" makes the imaum pray at a particular mosque; not the maiden, but her head, is descending the steps; beards are separated from faces, and yellow streaks of sect may be on fence posts for aught the reader knows; and turbans and flowing robes, emblems of rank, are put on spear- and mace-bearers.

And by such punctuation the beauty of the picture is entirely lost in a mere catalogue of things seen in India—and this is not literature.

A NEW ENGLAND WOODPILE

When the charitable mantle of the snow has covered the ugliness of the earth, as one looks towards the woodlands he may see a distant dark speck emerge

from the blue shadow of the woods and crawl slowly houseward. If born to the customs of this wintry land, he may guess at once what it is; if not, speculation, after a little, gives way to certainty, when the indistinct atom grows into a team of quick-stepping horses or deliberate oxen hauling a sled-load of wood to the farm-house.

It is more than that. It is a part of the woods themselves, with much of their wildness clinging to it, and with records, slight and fragmentary, yet legible, of the lives of trees and birds and beasts and men, coming to our door.

Before the sounds of the creaking sled and the answering creak of the snow are heard, one sees the regular puffs of the team's breath jetting out and climbing the cold air. The head and shoulders of the muffled driver then appear, as he sticks by narrow foothold to the hinder part of his sled, or trots behind it beating his breast with his numb hands. Prone like a crawling band of scouts, endwise like battering-rams, not upright, with green banners waving, Birnam wood comes to Dunsinane to fight King Frost.

As the woodpile grows at the farm-house door in a huge windrow of sled-length wood or an even wall of cord wood, so in the woods there widens a patch of uninterrupted daylight. Deep shade and barred and netted shadow turn to almost even whiteness, as the axe saps the foundation of summer homes of birds and the winter fastnesses of the squirrels and raccoons. Here are the tracks of sled and team, where they wound among rocks and stumps and over cradle knolls to make up a load; and there are those of the chopper

by the stump where he stood to fell the tree, and along the great trough made by its fall. The snow is flecked with chips, dark or pale according to their kind, just as they alighted from their short flight, bark up or down or barkless or edgewise, and with dry twigs and torn scraps of scattered moss.

When the chopper comes to his work in the morning, he finds traces of nightly visitors to his white island that have drifted to its shores out of the gray sea of woods. Here is the print of the hare's furry foot where he came to nibble the twigs of poplar and birch that yesterday were switching the clouds, but have fallen, manna-like, from skyward to feed him. A fox has skirted its shadowy margin, then ventured to explore it, and in a thawy night a raccoon has waddled across it.

The woodman is apt to kindle a fire more for company than warmth, though he sits by it to eat his cold dinner, casting the crumbs to the chickadees, that come fearlessly about him at all times. Blazing or smouldering by turns, as it is fed or starved, the fire humanizes the woods more than the man does. Now and then it draws to it a visitor, oftenest a fox-hunter who has lost his hound, and stops for a moment to light his pipe at the embers and to ask if his dog has been seen or heard. Then he wades off through the snow, and is presently swallowed out of sight by gray trees and blue shadows. Or the hound comes in search of his master or a lost trail. He halts for an instant, with a wistful look on his sorrowful face, then disappears, nosing his way into the maw of the woods.

If the wood is cut "sled length," which is a saving of time and also of chips, that will now be made at the door and will serve to boil the tea-kettle in summer, instead of rotting to slow fertilization of the woodlot, the chopper is one of the regular farm hands or a "day man," and helps load the sled when it comes. If the wood is four foot, he is a professional, chopping by the cord, and not likely to pile his cords too high or long, nor so closely that the squirrels have much more trouble in making their way through them than over them; and the man comes and goes according to his ambition to earn money.

In whichever capacity the chopper plies his axe, he is pretty sure to bring no sentimentalism to his task. He inherits the feeling that was held by the old pioneers toward trees, who looked upon the noblest of them as only giant weeds, encumbering the ground, and best got rid of by the shortest means. To him the tree is a foe worthy of no respect or mercy, and he feels the triumph of a savage conqueror when it comes crashing down and he mounts the prostrate trunk to dismember it; the more year-marks encircling its heart, the greater his victory. To his ears, its many tongues tell nothing, or preach only heresy. Away with the old tree to the flames! To give him his due, he is a skillful executioner, and will compel a tree to fall across any selected stump within its length. If one could forget the tree, it is a pretty sight to watch the easy swing of the axe, and see how unerringly every blow goes to its mark, knocking out chips of a span's breadth. It does not look difficult nor like work; but could you strike "twice in a place," or in half

a day bring down a tree twice as thick as your body? The wise farmer cuts, for fuel, only the dead and decaying trees in his woodlot, leaving saplings and thrifty old trees to "stand up and grow better," as the Yankee saying is.

There is a prosperous and hospitable look in a great woodpile at a farmhouse door. Logs with the moss of a hundred years on them, breathing the odors of the woods, have come to warm the inmates and all in-comers. The white smoke of these chimneys is spicy with the smell of seasoned hard wood, and has a savor of roasts and stews that makes one hungry. If you take the back track on a trail of pitchy smoke, it is sure to lead you to a squalid threshold with its starved heap of pine roots and half-decayed wood. Thrown down carelessly beside it is a dull axe, wielded as need requires with spiteful awkwardness by a slatternly woman, or laboriously upheaved and let fall with uncertain stroke by a small boy.

INDEX

No effort is made in this index to refer to the complete details of treatment of the principal marks, for the treatment of such marks is almost continuous throughout the book. The table of contents will make up, in some measure, for this deficiency.

References are to pages.

The following pages contain extracts from a few press notices of the first edition of this book.

WHY WE PUNCTUATE

OR

REASON VS. RULE IN THE USE OF MARKS

(Published anonymously in 1896)

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS NOTICES OF THE FIRST EDITION

The well considered contents of "Why We Punctuate" should work a reform in the manner of using points. The author proposes no startling innovations, but approaches his subject from the plane of pure reason, substituting carefully-thought-out principles for the empirical rules, which have too long governed American printing offices, and giving us for the first time a rationale as foundation for the entire system.

The work itself shows that practically nothing has been done to advance the science of punctuation for many years, the entire subject having apparently crystallized after the publication of Wilson's book and the compendium of it prepared by Bigelow. How much these last lacked has not been apparent until this author took up the cudgels for less arbitrary rule and more distinctions based on good judgment. He throws light into dark places and makes it possible at last for a student to acquire a number of broad principles in place of the interminable rules and exceptions of the earlier writers.

The book is to be welcomed as a much needed contribution to a much neglected topic of universal interest.—*Chicago Tribune.*

No student of English should be without this book.—*The Globe* (Boston).

The work is valuable, not only to the learner, but also to the scholar.—*Baltimore American.*

The author has undoubtedly gone to the root of the matter in his fundamental theory.—*The Beacon* (Boston).

Though I have read proof twenty-five years or more, I find I can learn some valuable things from this book.—*Henry R. Boss, Editor of the Proofsheet* (Chicago).

With journalistic instinct the author has sought the reasons for the use of all marks; and instead of copying what previous authors have said, he has simply told *why* marks are used.—*Philadelphia Press.*

This book unquestionably has a mission, and it seems to us that the author has performed his task with exceptional intelligence. The book may be said to represent the best American usage of our day.—*Review of Reviews.*

The author is a painstaking and intelligent writer, and the line of reasoning followed by him is original and convincing, while his explanations and illustrations make the subject of punctuation both interesting and easy to learn.—*Philadelphia Telegraph.*

It is philosophical, clear, simple, and teaches the intimate relation between punctuation and the meaning of language. It shows plainly that we must punctuate to suit our meaning. An excellent text-book for the schools and for practical reference. —*The Union-Signal* (Chicago).

The subject of punctuation seldom receives sufficient attention in our schools and colleges, and its importance is so great that such an intelligent discussion of it as that contained in these pages deserves commendation. It is surprising how much even educated persons, and even those accustomed to composition, may gain from such a treatise.—*The Congregationalist* (Boston).

The whole problem is reduced to the fundamental principles which control it. They are easily grasped, and the numerous examples and illustrations collected and arranged by the author, instead of scattering the impression of the book, only concentrate the reader's attention on the few principles which control the subject. The book is one to be commended.—*The Independent* (New York).

The author takes the ground that the use of a mark of punctuation is determined by its meaning, and the meaning of the language it governs. He elucidates these meanings clearly, concisely, and logically. The book may be said to be the only one available which gives an exhaustive treatment of the reasons and rules of proper punctuation, plainly and intelligently set forth.—*The Free Press* (Detroit).

It is one of the most rational works ever issued on the subject, and will be of incalculable value as a guide to proper punctuation. The author departs from the usual set rules commonly taught in text-books, and simplifies the process by classifying the marks according to the necessity, or relative length of pause, required to give our language its proper meaning, not only as appears to the writer, but also as will appear to the reader.—*The Bee* (Omaha).

The author knows how to punctuate himself, and he knows how to make the principles that guide him clear to others.

"Why We Punctuate" is a valuable addition to the literature

of punctuation. Its examples are, as a rule, particularly happy. Some of them make plain at a glance the reasons for rules which have been disputed by many authorities, but which are based on common sense. . . . It is a practical guide to punctuation, and any one who masters it thoroughly ought to be able afterward always to punctuate correctly.—*The Writer* (Boston).

The distinctive feature of the book is that it is not a mere collection of cut-and-dried rules. It goes into the reasons for the use of the several marks, and deals with the logical relations of language. It is a book that helps to clear thinking on the part of the writer who employs it.—*The Buffalo Express.*

Punctuation is treated as based upon the science of language and not altogether upon grammatical construction. The author's examples are all good and new and his ideas original. Some latitude is allowed, according to construction of sentences, and common sense is permitted to depart, if clearness of meaning is desired, from arbitrary rules.—*Baltimore Sun.*

The author of this work has not copied from previous authors, but has drawn largely upon current literature for illustrative examples, and has brought together several hundred short quotations of great interest, beyond the use of examples of correct punctuation. His reasoning is original. His theories, as explained and illustrated, make the subject both interesting and easy to understand.

The book is valuable to the learner, and the scholar, as well, and it cannot fail to attract the attention of students of the English language, and it merits the commendation of all competent judges.—*Journal of Education* (Boston).

If the author's name were on the title-page of his book we would know whom to thank for the best and most sensible work on this subject that has yet been published.

The student of this book, if he masters its teachings, will not fall into the absurdities and obscurities of mechanical punctuation on the one hand, or of slovenly punctuation on the other, but will punctuate in such a way as to make his meaning clear—which is one essential art in good writing.

"Why We Punctuate" should be in the hands of every newspaper man and author, and it ought to become a text-book in advanced schools.—*Democrat and Chronicle* (Rochester, N. Y.).

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